

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: MARGUERITE HIGGINS: AN EXAMINATION OF
LEGACY AND GENDER BIAS

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This study examined the historical legacy of journalist Marguerite Higgins. The core research question of this dissertation is whether the legacy of Higgins, as portrayed in history, accurately reflects the facts of her life. The thesis focuses on allegations in the literature regarding unethical and immoral behavior by Higgins as she pursued her career, and addresses the degree to which these allegations may have been influenced by gender bias.

The word ‘legacy,’ as used in this dissertation, is defined as that which has been handed down from the past. This study examined archival material and analyzed information concerning Higgins’ life by searching the collections of Higgins’ papers and those of people who knew and worked with her during her career, as well as those of authors who wrote about her. The thesis then compared

this information about Higgins obtained through primary research with the portrayal about Higgins that has been established over the years by scholars and other authors who have written about her since her death.

The theoretical context of this study is the psychology of stereotypes and gender bias. The study considered whether the attitudes and behavior of Higgins' male peers might have been influenced by bias. The work of other authors has described discrimination against women journalists, including Higgins, by newspaper editors, for example, in their restriction of women to writing for the women's section of newspapers, and by the U.S. military in its efforts to prevent women from covering combat. This study focuses on more subtle forms of possible discrimination, the attitudes and behavior of her male colleagues.

The study found inaccuracies in Higgins' historical legacy and determined that there were numerous gaps between information available in archival collections and the portrayal of her by authors who created the written record of her life.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS: AN EXAMINATION OF LEGACY
AND GENDER BIAS

by

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DEDICATION

To my son, Matthew

In memory of my sister, Anne Peck

With appreciation to Brahms

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CHAPTER 1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine whether the legacy of journalist Marguerite Higgins, as portrayed in history, accurately reflects the facts of her life. The legacy of Higgins not only includes accounts of her energetic and sometimes courageous coverage of wars in Europe, Korea and Vietnam, but a large portion of what has been written about her focuses on moral and ethical questions about her behavior. Discussion in the literature of Higgins' character and conduct often distracts from and undermines accounts of her professional accomplishments. This study examines the sources of these allegations and analyzes the facts supporting the claims that were made. This thesis considers possible causes for these allegations made about Higgins' behavior, including the degree to which they may have been influenced by gender bias.

There are two meanings of the word 'legacy,' and this thesis addresses both of them. First, legacy means that which has been handed down from the past. In this sense, the thesis researches the knowledge about Higgins that has been handed down over the years by scholars and other authors who have written about her since her death. Further, since the topic of this thesis is the 'historical' legacy of Higgins, the objective is to develop an understanding of Higgins that accurately reflects the available facts concerning her life. Thus, the thesis uses archival research to identify what is known about Higgins at various points in time during her life, and applies that knowledge to an analysis of what has been written about her. Second, legacy has the connotation of a gift, and in this context the study considers the contributions made

by the life and career of Higgins to increasing the interest in and opportunities for women in journalism.

The moral and ethical questions about Higgins' behavior are considered in the context of the facts about her life that are identified through archival research. When an allegation is not supported by facts, the question is considered whether gender bias could have been a factor behind the assertion. Gender bias "involves unequal and harmful behavior toward women only because they are women."¹ Analysis of this archival material can identify behavior by Higgins' colleagues that was unequal and harmful. In these instances, a criterion that is necessary for gender bias to have taken place can be applied. Consideration is then given to the degree to which the behavior might have been motivated by the fact that Higgins was a woman.

Therefore, this study analyzes Higgins' historical legacy in the context of the facts known; identifies the factors that shaped that legacy, including gender bias; and creates a record of Higgins' life that is informed through an understanding of the facts and factors identified and analyzed in this study. By analyzing Higgins' established legacy in the context of new information, the study explores whether Higgins has been inaccurately portrayed and / or unfairly treated in journalism history.

The history of women and journalism frequently has been conceptualized in two ways. First, the historical facts were presented through discussion of individuals who have played a role in the increased participation over the years by women in the journalistic endeavors. For example, in *Taking Their Place*, Beasley and Gibbons presented a history of women and mass media that started with the very foundation of

¹ Angela R. Gillem, Radhika Sehgal, and Shiata Forcet, "Understanding Prejudice and Discrimination," in *Issues in the Psychology of Women*, ed. Maryka Biaggio and Michel Hersen (New York: Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers, 2000), p.55.

our country, the printing of the Declaration of Independence by Mary Katherine Goddard.² The overall history was then developed with additional stories of women journalists participating in different jobs in print and broadcast journalism, with an eye toward the contributions made by each one along the way as the level of participation by women in the industry increased. Thus, Beasley and Gibbons included such women as Sara Willis Parton, who was a popular columnist at the time of the Civil War,³ Ida Wells-Barnett, the noted African-American journalist who worked at the turn of the twentieth century,⁴ Elizabeth Cochrane, famous as the stunt reporter “Nellie Bly” in the late 1880s,⁵ investigative reporter Ida Tarbell in the early 1900s,⁶ as well as other noted women journalists who were pioneers in their work as foreign correspondents, war correspondents and broadcasters. A similar historical approach was taken by Barbara Belford in *Brilliant Bylines*,⁷ Kay Mills in her book, *A Place in the News*,⁸ and Madelon Schilpp and Sharon Murphy in *Great Women of the Press*.⁹

² Maurine H Beasley and Sheila R. Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism* (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 2002), p.51.

³ *Ibid.*, p.87.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.101.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.112.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.123.

⁷ Barbara Belford, *Brilliant Bylines: A Biographical Anthology of Notable Newspaperwomen in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

⁸ Kay Mills, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Page* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

⁹ Madelon Golden Schilpp and Sharon M. Murphy, *Great Women of the Press* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983).

The second way that this history was conceptualized was through the analysis of the aggregate participation and influence of women in journalism at various points in time, and discussion of the reasons that either (a) were responsible for women achieving this status, or (b) the factors that restrained women from even greater participation and influence. For example, Beasley and Gibbons discussed the influence that the women's movement had on the greater attention that media paid to women and the increased number of women working as journalists; the difficulty women had in breaking into areas considered to be male domains of journalism, such as working as war correspondents; and the issue of stereotypes of female appearance as women began working in television. In this second, broader level of analysis, consideration is given to the impact that the aggregate attitudes of owners and managers in the news businesses had on discrimination against women in the industry, and the degree to which the general attitudes of male journalists toward women coming into their profession were responsible for gender bias. Thus, while the history of women in journalism was built on the contributions of individuals, the analysis of the attitudes and bias that women confronted has primarily taken place at an aggregate or institutional level. And, while individual incidents of bias were sometimes cited to document the aggregate level of analysis of the problem, previous accounts generally have not investigated these specific incidents to explore either the validity of the report of an incident; the degree of negative attitude or bias that existed in those that took place; or the possible cause of the attitude or bias.

This study investigates in depth the attitudes and incidents of gender bias on an individual level of analysis. By doing so, this thesis provides a deeper

understanding of the factors that were the foundation of the aggregate level of bias against women in journalism in the era that Higgins worked as a correspondent.

In addition to the historical studies of women journalists and the aggregate analysis of institutional attitudes and bias, which often have taken a chronological approach to show women's progress, autobiographies have been written by women journalists and biographies written about them. As is discussed below in the literature review, Higgins wrote an autobiography, *News Is a Singular Thing*,¹⁰ and two authors have written biographies of her. Antoinette May wrote a book, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*,¹¹ and Kathleen Keeshen wrote a doctoral dissertation, *Marguerite Higgins: Journalist 1920-1966*.¹² All of these previous works included discussion of gender bias against Higgins. In her biography, Higgins wrote about the controversy caused by the fact that she, a woman, was sent overseas by her newspaper to cover the end of World War II. Higgins described the overt gender discrimination against her by the United States military during the Korea War. Higgins recounts the story of the order by General Walton Walker that she must leave Korea because she was a woman, and how General Douglas MacArthur reversed this order. In addition, Higgins gives the details of the decision by the Navy not to allow her to cover the amphibious assault on Inchon, and the mix-up in orders that allowed her to participate in that operation. Higgins referred to the biased attitudes and behavior of the male correspondents covering the war. Higgins also described how

¹⁰ Marguerite Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1955).

¹¹ Antoinette May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins* (New York: Beaufort Books, 1983).

¹² Kathleen Kearney Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966" (University of Maryland, 1983).

these events made her feel, as well as her response to the situations in which this bias and discrimination put her. In her book, May covered much of the same material, as she quoted from Higgins' biography about these events. From interviews May conducted with a number of Higgins' contemporaries, she produced additional material that either commented on the bias and discrimination that Higgins wrote about or introduced new observations about her, including some that appeared to be biased themselves. In writing her dissertation, Keeshen took the same approach as May, quoting from Higgins' writing and developing additional material through interviews.

Keeshen wrote that her dissertation would “shed light on the experiences of [Higgins'] women peer contemporaries and women journalists of the future”¹³ by studying the circumstances and events of Higgins' life. Keeshen also stated that her dissertation would “explore the question of to what extent, if any, being a woman in a traditionally men's profession obstructed her attainment of professional objectives, recognition and acceptance.”¹⁴ Keeshen accomplished this objective in the sense that she used Higgins' writing and the new information she developed to *describe* how Higgins was obstructed from working as a journalist. Although May wrote her book apparently for commercial, not scholarly purposes, the writing of Keeshen and May had the effect of accomplishing much the same thing. Both works, plus Higgins' own, are descriptive in nature. May and Keeshen accepted the additional information they developed as being accurate and not being prejudicial in itself.

¹³ Ibid., p.iii.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.iv.

The scope of this study goes beyond the descriptive material. This study uses archival research from several collections to probe more deeply into the circumstances and events described by Higgins herself as well as May and Keeshen. This study seeks to validate whether the information given to May, Keeshen and other authors who have written about Higgins by her peers has been accurate, true and free of bias. Thus, this study challenges the historical legacy that these authors created for Higgins by seeking to determine whether that legacy has been influenced by bias.

This study contributes to existing research in journalism history in three ways. First, it adds a new dimension to the understanding of Higgins' life and work. Higgins' historical importance is confirmed by the fact that scholars and other authors of journalism literature and studies of women journalists have included her in their work. While these authors acknowledged Higgins' place in journalism history by noting her achievements, what has been written about often focuses on her apparent shortcomings. By focusing on allegations concerning Higgins' behavior and analyzing how those allegations became such an important part of what has been written about her, this study provides new understanding of the accuracy of her legacy.

Second, in addition to providing a greater understanding of how Higgins' existing legacy was created, this study presents new information that will enable a more accurate legacy to be developed. As will be demonstrated in the literature review, the controversial aspects of Higgins' character and behavior sometimes received as much or more attention than her professional accomplishments. By subjecting these controversial elements of Higgins' life to research and analysis that

determines their accuracy, this study will provide a better perspective of the role they should play in her legacy.

Third, by analyzing the sources of information used by authors who wrote about Higgins as well as other influences on those writers, this research becomes a case study of how an historical legacy is created. By comparing Higgins' existing legacy to new information, the study shows how the history of a person who has been dead for almost forty years has been both accurately and inaccurately portrayed. Thus, this case study provides caution and insights to future historians.

The theoretical context of this study is the psychology of stereotypes and gender bias. The historical record of Higgins includes gender-based decisions and acts that affected her career, just as similar influences affected all women journalists of her period. In the 1940s and 1950s women were playing a greater role in the workplace. Journalism was a male-dominated business in which women were given few opportunities. War correspondent assignments were especially considered to be a male domain. The primary interest of this study, however, is subtle forms of gender-based behavior aside from overt sexism in employment. The study examines attitudes that Higgins' male peers had about her, considers whether bias may have been included in information that sources gave to those who wrote about Higgins, and explores the possibility that those authors themselves may have been biased against her. While this study is informed by the literature of psychology, it is a thesis on journalism history. Thus, the psychological principles of stereotypes and bias serve as context for a specific examination of historical events. Because of the nature of Higgins' life history, consideration also is given to writings regarding fame and

celebrity. One of the major differences between Higgins' life story and that of most of her female colleagues is that she achieved a celebrity status at a young age. The influence of her celebrity on the attitudes of her peers thus becomes a consideration.

This study has several limitations. The first is the access to definitive information about Higgins thirty-seven years after her death. Very few journalists from Higgins' generation are still alive and / or available to be interviewed. Research into manuscript collections of people who knew and / or worked with Higgins was conducted to obtain new information to be used in the assessment and revision of Higgins' existing legacy. The archival collections of Higgins and author Richard Kluger produced a great deal of valuable information. Manuscript collections of others produced smaller amounts of information, but yielded important material that raised questions and gave new insights into the way Higgins has been treated in history.

The second limitation is that most archival material contains factual information about events. This study is concerned with attitudes and bias, which can only be inferred from analysis of static historical records.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This inquiry requires that consideration be given to: (1) the historical context of women in journalism at the time Higgins was working as a reporter, foreign correspondent and columnist, (2) the written legacy that Higgins established for herself through her books, (3) the development of Higgins' legacy through the writings of others, and (4) the psychology of gender bias.

Historical Perspective on Women Journalists.

As is the case in almost every profession, the print and broadcast news organizations that constitute the business of journalism have been slow to grant the same opportunities to women that they offered to men. In the case of journalism, however, women have faced a systemic barrier. Because women historically had not been given equal opportunities in business, government and many other sectors of society, they were not engaged in activity that was considered important. According to Mills, because women were not seen as having much impact on what was considered important, they didn't make news.¹ Newsworthy events were those that resulted from male-oriented power and influence in society, and newspapers sent male reporters to cover and write about them.

Ironically, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, newspapers devised a strategy to increase circulation by inventing ways for their female reporters to make news themselves. The first version of this strategy involved the reporter initiating a sensational event that the newspaper would cover exclusively, for example Nellie Bly

¹ Mills, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Page*, p.5.

racing to beat the eighty-day record for around-the-world travel, Elizabeth Jordan venturing to Virginia and Tennessee to cover moonshine camps, and Elizabeth Banks dressing as a prostitute so she would get arrested and could report on conditions in a women's jail. Eventually the use of female reporters in circulation-building efforts evolved to the point of women writing moving stories about crimes that emphasized feminine feelings and sympathy toward the victims. The work done by these "stunt girl" and "sob sister" reporters paved the way to more career opportunities for women journalists, although most women were restricted to writing for women's pages.²

The novelty value of using women journalists to build circulation of newspapers continued through the two world wars in the first half of the 20th century. As female correspondents were accredited by the U.S. Army to cover the wars, the newspapers promoted their "firsts" – the first woman to visit the front, board a battleship, or go on a bombing mission.³ Progression from balloon flights to bombing missions suggested that women journalists had made major advancements by the end of World War II. In the context of their positions relative to their male colleagues, however, their progress toward equality of opportunity had been slow.

Early women journalists wrote that not only were their ambitions thwarted by limited opportunities, but that they also faced additional factors that constrained their success. Entering the "man's world" of newspapers they found themselves defined by their employers and colleagues not as journalists, but as females. The price of this

² Beasley and Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism*, pp. 111-22; Marion Marzolf, *Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1977), pp.33-39.

³ Julia Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), p.4.

label was lower pay, unwanted sexual advances and sexist barriers to promotion. While they strived to have successful careers in the face of these obstacles, they had to deal with balancing the demands of being a reporter with the sensibilities of being a woman.⁴ As the ranks of women reporters grew, the challenges of operating in the male dominated culture of journalism became more complex. Women who tried to shed the label of 'female' and earn the badge of 'journalist' risked being judged as over-ambitious, aggressive or underhanded by their male counterparts.⁵

Although woman worked for newspapers as "stunt girls" and "sob sisters" and covered society events for the women's pages, the objective of many of them was to write about the people and events that made up general news.⁶ With the rise of internationalism and the ease of travel that followed World War I, there was growing interest by women in working as foreign correspondents. However, this interest conflicted with attitudes held by editors that women correspondents would not be respected by foreign government officials, and, that even if they were, newspapers would lose them to marriage in short order. In 1950 only 4% of foreign correspondents were women. By 1987 that proportion had grown only to 20%.⁷

Women war correspondents.

Higgins is primarily known as a war correspondent during the Korean War, because it was for her work covering that conflict that she won the Pulitzer Prize and

⁴ Linda Steiner, "Gender at Work: Early Accounts by Women Journalists," *Journalism History* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1997): pp.2-12.

⁵ Anne Sebba, *Battling for News: The Rise of the Woman Reporter* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), p.178.

⁶ Steiner, "Gender at Work: Early Accounts by Women Journalists," pp.2-12.

⁷ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, p.4; Marzolf, *Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists*, p.86.

it was at this time that she became famous. While part of the reason that Higgins is well known is that she overcame resistance by the military to her reporting combat, the fact is that women were working as war correspondents even prior to World War I.⁸ In 1848 Margaret Fuller, reporting for Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, covered the unrest in Italy and the military offensive there by the French army. Cora Taylor Crane covered the Greco-Turkish war for the *New York Journal* in 1897. The *Boston Pilot*'s Mary Boyle O'Reilly reported on the 1914 German invasion of Louvain, Belgium. In 1915, Mary Roberts Rinehart sent dispatches to the *Saturday Evening Post* from Dunkirk, France during the German bombardment.

Only one woman, Peggy Hull of the *El Paso Morning Times*, was officially accredited by the United States military to cover World War I. Because of her early reports of the training of American soldiers in France, the military banned her from traveling to press camps near forward battle positions. Hull switched to writing profiles of soldiers, which became popular with readers in the U.S. Hull's male journalist colleagues demanded that the military remove her from the war zone, and she returned without ever witnessing a battle.⁹

Women correspondents were in Europe during the time that Adolf Hitler was consolidating his power, and reported these developments. Living in Paris in the 1930s, Janet Flanner chronicled the rise of Hitler for the *New Yorker*.¹⁰ In the early 1930s, Sigrid Schultz was stationed in Berlin by the *Chicago Tribune* and interviewed

⁸ Michael Emery, *On the Front Lines: Following America's Foreign Correspondents across the Twentieth Century* (Washington DC: The American University Press, 1995), p.28; Nancy Caldwell Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1999), p.xvii.

⁹ Sebba, *Battling for News: The Rise of the Woman Reporter*, p.147; Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War*, pp.xvii-xviii.

¹⁰ Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War*, p.10.

Hitler, as did Dorothy Thompson of the Curtis syndicate.¹¹ In 1933 Thompson was banished from Germany for writing about Hitler's purge of his opponents.¹²

The mid-1930s marked the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. In 1936, Eleanor Packard of United Press covered the early battles of General Franco and his Nationalist army.¹³ Francis Davis covered the fighting for the *Chicago Daily News*, and was known for concealing news dispatches in her clothes and smuggling them to France at a time when she and her colleagues could not file from Spain.¹⁴ Other women who covered the Spanish Civil War were Virginia Cowles of Hearst Publications, Josephine Herbst of the *New York Post* and Martha Gellhorn of *Collier's* magazine.

More than 130 women covered World War II and many of these women traveled to witness the military action at the battlefield. For example, Dorothy Thompson accompanied the French Army in 1940 to cover the placement of artillery on the Maginot Line.¹⁵ That same year Helen Kirkpatrick of the *Chicago Daily News* and Virginia Cowles, who worked for Hearst Publications, witnessed the air battles between the British and German fighters over the English Channel at Dover.¹⁶ In April 1941 Betty Wason of CBS News reported on the German air raids on Athens. Author Nancy Sorel wrote that the work of these and other women war

¹¹ Ibid., p.6.

¹² Ibid., p.7.

¹³ Ibid., p.26.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.29-30.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.79.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.96.

correspondents was remarkable because “at the time few newspaperwomen had made it from the society desk to the newsroom.”¹⁷ Sorel noted that in World War II, women were employed as war correspondents by “more than twenty-five newspapers, about the same number of magazines, eight wire services, and five radio networks.”¹⁸

Higgins on Higgins.

Higgins wrote four books about her life and experiences as a journalist that provide an understanding of how she viewed her career in terms of her professional objectives, the personal qualities that she thought contributed to her success, and the degree to which she perceived bias and discrimination by her newspaper, the military and her colleagues threatened to impede her success.

Journalism historians primarily have drawn material from Higgins’ books topically, as they have written about Korea, the cold war, Vietnam, war correspondents, or women journalists. The discussion below, however, considers her four books as one body of work. This approach gives a picture of the intellectual and professional progression of Higgins during the period 1951 – 1965. Higgins’ books provide her personal perspective on the reports and columns that she wrote during her twenty-one years with the New York *Herald Tribune*, the three years she wrote for *Newsday*, and the dozens of articles she wrote for magazines ranging from *Good Housekeeping* to the *NEA Journal*.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.xiii.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Higgins' first book was *War in Korea*. It began with the story of Higgins' assignment as head of the New York *Herald Tribune*'s Far East office in Tokyo and provided a battle-by-battle account of her experiences in the Korean War in 1950. The book spanned the entire time she reported on the war, from the initial invasion by North Korean forces to the time she completed her assignment to Korea following the intervention by China and the retreat by the U.S. Marines from the Chosin Reservoir.

War in Korea informed us about three aspects of Higgins character. First, we received insights into her determination and strong will. An important subplot of the story of Higgins' experience in Korea was her fight against the military decisions that, however well intentioned, restricted her ability to cover the war and even threatened to remove her from the country because she was a woman. The fact that she stood up to the military establishment and won, even though she was a young, twenty-nine year old woman without serious credentials as a war correspondent (having only a few months of prior experience at the end of World War II), indicated her strength of character and the degree of her determination. Second, in the book Higgins presented herself as having a selfless devotion to covering the war. While her critics would say the fact that she wrote this is an example of self-promotion and provides greater insight into her ambition than her bravery; it is hard to ignore the fact that she seemingly disregarded the dangers of being at the front as she reported first-hand accounts of the battles. Third, the book provided insights into Higgins' intelligence and analytical capabilities as it included her commentaries, ranging from

philosophical questions of cruelty in war to geopolitical considerations of Soviet influence and the future of Southeast Asia.¹⁹

In her autobiography, *News Is a Singular Thing*,²⁰ Higgins pursued two themes. In the first she provided recollections of her family and upbringing, focusing on how her background influenced her personal and professional development. From this retrospective she extracted the personality traits that she believed were the driving forces behind her achievements. Higgins' second theme was the story of those achievements. She took the reader from her days on the city desk at the New York *Herald Tribune* to her coverage of the Korean War, intertwining her personal triumphs and tragedies with triumphs and tragedies in world affairs. Not unlike what she wrote in *War in Korea*, Higgins again engaged in self-promotion as she portrayed herself in the heroic terms of a fearless inner-driven seeker of truth. While the book recounted many of the adventures that readers of the *Herald Tribune* enjoyed under Higgins' byline, it provided a self-reported study of her character and personality under different circumstances and influences; from how her father's own wartime adventures ignited the flame of her desire to live her life beyond national interests or boundaries, to her self-doubts that invitations to interview world leaders did not result from their judgments that she was a great reporter, but more probably from the fact that she was a famous one.

Higgins described her personal anxiety and lack of self-confidence that, in her mind, set her apart from her professional colleagues. It was these perceived inadequacies that fueled her motivation to achieve. But because self-criticism drove

¹⁹ Marguerite Higgins, *War in Korea* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1951).

²⁰ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*.

her to pursue success on her own terms, she portrayed herself as a loner. While she took this path because it was the only one open to her, she knew that it came with a price. Higgins described the treatment she received during her life, and unwittingly predicted how some people would treat her after her death when she wrote, “The sin of uniqueness frequently makes those who have committed it the target of legend and vicious comment.”²¹

In *Red Plush and Black Bread*,²² Higgins gave an account of her ten-week trip behind the Iron Curtain in 1954. Higgins was the first reporter to get a visa to travel to Russia after the relaxation of the Stalin era restrictions on visitors. While it lacked the drama of her two previous books, *Red Plush and Black Bread* provided another example of Higgins’ willingness to take personal risks to get the story. In this case, she left the relative security of Moscow to tour Central Soviet Asia and Siberia and challenged police operatives to visit such a restricted location as a collective farm. To get her story, she also convinced Soviet citizens to take the risk of talking to a foreigner, visited working people whose financial hardships forced them to live in partitioned apartments, and interviewed people on the street, taxi drivers, hotel managers, and sports stars. For her efforts, Higgins was arrested sixteen times. The book provided insight into Higgins’ interest in and concern about communism, which she developed in post World War II Berlin and remained focused on until her death while covering the Vietnam War. She made distinctions about various phases of communist rule and tracked its development from the time of Stalin to that of Khrushchev.

²¹ Ibid., p.36.

²² Marguerite Higgins, *Red Plush and Black Bread* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1955).

Higgins, in addition, demonstrated the capacity to expand her field of vision beyond people and events to conceptualize news stories in a larger context. She exhibited an ability to identify factors that would have long-term significance. In her interviews with the Russian people she found the inherent flaw that eventually would lead to the demise of communist power. Higgins wrote:

“But despite all the Communist claims to the contrary the regime has not altered basic human nature one whit. In fact, from a sociological and psychological point of view, the most fascinating part of Russian life today is the way in which Communism has been forced to accommodate itself to human nature.”²³

Higgins final book about her work as a journalist focused on her experiences covering the Vietnam War. Like many aspects of the Vietnam War, coverage of the conflict by journalists was not without controversy. Most of this debate centered on the question of whether correspondents stationed in Vietnam portrayed a darker situation than really existed, or conversely, whether visiting journalists, like Higgins, saw a rosier picture that reflected what the administration in Washington wanted people to see.²⁴ While Higgins supported the U.S. government’s position during the early years of the conflict, her willingness to go beyond the press briefings in Saigon to get to the source of the story led to a deeper understanding of the causes that were shaping the war. The fact that in 1965 Higgins thought to give her book the title *Our Vietnam Nightmare* suggests that she perceived the underlying truths about what she was witnessing. The book reinforced the previous image that Higgins presented about herself as an intrepid journalist. She left the safety of Saigon and traveled into

²³ Ibid., p.198.

²⁴ Susan D. Moeller, *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience in Combat* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), p.357.

the Vietnam countryside to get close to the unrest that was sweeping through the villages at that time. She interviewed the key antagonist behind the Buddhist suicides and riots.

More important, however, is that *Our Vietnam Nightmare* showed that Higgins had developed into a seasoned journalist during the twelve years since she left Korea. The fact that she conceptualized the events in Vietnam in the context of global communist objectives shows how she applied her experiences in Eastern Europe and Russia to this situation a world apart. And the fact that she wrote this story and defended it in the face of universal rejection at the time showed that, whether in the end she was proven right or wrong on Vietnam policy, her courage extended beyond physical war to the battlefield of ideas.²⁵

The image that Higgins created in her writing was that of a person who was: (1) a courageous reporter not afraid to work at the front lines, (2) a strong and principled individual who stood up to institutional injustice, (3) an independent thinker and actor who established her own boundaries in her life, (4) an astute political analyst whose years of international experience gave her insights into world events, especially as they related to communism, and (5) an extremely hard-working and driven person whose devotion to journalism enabled her to achieve all that she did.

Higgins also revealed her weaknesses and shortcomings in what she wrote about herself. Higgins wrote about her aggressiveness and quick temper,²⁶ her

²⁵ Marguerite Higgins, *Our Vietnam Nightmare* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

²⁶ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.107.

reputation for being cold toward others,²⁷ her strong competitive drive,²⁸ her propensity to behave rudely when she did not get what she wanted,²⁹ and her “one-track preoccupied personality” that others sometimes found difficult.³⁰ In addition, Higgins disclosed aspects of her character that could influence her behavior. She wrote that she lacked self-confidence,³¹ and was not effective at self-promotion.³² All of this, Higgins acknowledged, made her “different” from her colleagues in ways that made them hostile toward her.³³ Higgins realized that she was a “target for comment” by others.³⁴ This is the written historical legacy that Higgins left us in her own hand.

Higgins in journalism literature.

Primarily, though, like that of all people of historical importance, the legacy of Higgins has been written by the hands of others – the scholars and other authors who have written about her since her death in 1966. Treatment of Higgins in journalism literature falls into two categories. First, in addition to her own writing, by the time of Higgins’ death, numerous articles had been written about her that contributed to the received knowledge with which scholars and others writers had to work. Second, as analysis is made of the historical legacy of Higgins that exists

²⁷ Ibid., p.32.

²⁸ Ibid., p.39.

²⁹ Ibid., p.57.

³⁰ Ibid., pp.164-65.

³¹ Ibid., p.161.

³² Ibid., pp.206-07.

³³ Ibid., p.36.

³⁴ Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.99.

today, consideration must be given to the sequence of contributions that authors have made over the years. It is necessary to examine what has been written about Higgins in chronological order to understand the influences that one or more authors may have had in shaping her historical image.

Prior to 1950, Higgins' exposure in the press was limited to the byline that preceded her stories in the *Herald Tribune*. As will be discussed in a later section of this study, however, by this time Higgins had been working for the *Herald Tribune* for eight years in the U.S. and Europe and had achieved some notoriety among her journalist colleagues. Also, in 1950 journalist Toni Howard published a novel titled *Shriek with Pleasure*.³⁵ Howard's book was published at the time Higgins was leaving her post in Berlin and being transferred to Tokyo. As is discussed below, comments by journalist Keyes Beech and author Julia Edwards indicated that many of Higgins' colleagues believed that Howard used her as the model for the novel's lead character, Carla MacMurphy, and based the events in the book on the exploits of Higgins in Europe following World War II. In the novel, MacMurphy steals stories from other reporters and sleeps with news sources to get information. Howard never stated publicly whether or not the lead character in her book was modeled on Higgins.

Higgins' first press exposure in national magazines came fifteen days after the North Koreans attacked their neighbors to the south across the 38th parallel. The July 10, 1950 issue of *Time* magazine featured a photograph of Higgins in a story about press coverage of the early days of fighting in Korea. The article said that Higgins was one of the first correspondents on the scene and described her as a "winsome

³⁵ Toni Howard, *Shriek with Pleasure* (New York: Signet Books, 1950).

blond.”³⁶ That description and the photograph suggested that, in the judgment of the editors at *Time* the fact Higgins was a woman was newsworthy in itself. The July 10th issue of *Newsweek* also ran a photograph of Higgins. *Newsweek*'s story reported her first dispatch from Seoul as well, but also covered Higgins' release of a story about future bombing of North Korean airfields that she had obtained in an interview with General Douglas MacArthur.³⁷ Higgins' scoop from MacArthur was actually known by United Press and other news services, who had been holding the story for security reasons. The issue underscored the need for a formal system of censorship to replace the voluntary code that existed in Korea.³⁸ Higgins made the pages of *Newsweek* again on July 24th when the magazine reported the order by General Walton Walker that she leave Korea. Walker singled out Higgins because of her gender, when he determined that she could not continue to cover the war because a woman should not be “running around the front.”³⁹ While the July 24th issue of *Newsweek* included this story in its two columns of coverage of the press in Korea, the magazine devoted only one sentence of its article to the Army's removal of Higgins on the basis of gender.⁴⁰

On August 21st *Time* ran a story in the magazine's section covering “The Press” stating that Higgins and her *Herald Tribune* colleague Homer Bigart were doing a better job covering the war than the four-man team that the *New York Times*

³⁶ “The Press: Drawing the Line,” *Time*, July 10, 1950, 36.

³⁷ “The Press: This Time, Korea,” *Newsweek*, July 10, 1950, 54-55.

³⁸ Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty* (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1975), p.337.

³⁹ “The Press,” *Newsweek*, July 24, 1950, 48.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

had in the field.⁴¹ One month later, Higgins was in “The Press” section of *Time* again. This article included a photograph taken by *Life* magazine’s Carl Mydans of Higgins in a glamorous pose, dressed in military-issued khakis. The article told the story of the attractive, young women reporter in harm’s way covering the war. *Time* described her as “slender, durable News-hen Higgins, who covers Korea in tennis shoes, baggy pants and shirt and a fatigue_cap that usually conceals her bobbed, blond hair . . .” The two-column feature gave Higgins’ background, told about her experience and success covering World War II, and pointed out that she often beat her male competitors in coverage of front-line fighting in Korea. *Time* also included a letter from a regiment commander in Korea that had been printed in the *Herald Tribune*. It said Higgins’ bravery went beyond reporting the war to taking on the job of assisting medics attending to wounded soldiers during an attack.⁴²

The coverage Higgins received in *Time* and *Newsweek* gave her exposure far greater than she received through the *Herald Tribune*. Her newspaper, however, had given very special treatment to her dispatches from Korea. During the late 1940’s and early 1950’s the *Herald Tribune* was losing circulation and suffering from the growth of the *New York Times*.⁴³ Examination of the *Herald Tribune*’s early coverage of the Korean War suggests that the newspaper’s management adopted a strategy similar to that used by papers in earlier times when they featured “stunt girls” as a circulation-building strategy. The *Herald Tribune* used Higgins’ Korean War

⁴¹ "The Press," *Time*, August 21, 1950, 51.

⁴² "Pride of the Regiment," *Time* September 25, 1950, 63 -64.

⁴³ Richard Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), p.512.

dispatches to grab the reader's attention with headlines and photographs that featured their young, pretty female reporter in danger as she was at the scene to record the violence of war. For example, they ran her June 28, 1950 report on the front page under the headline "Seoul's Fall: By a Reporter Who Escaped," accompanied by a close-up photograph of Higgins⁴⁴; and the headline of her July 5, 1950 page-one dispatch read: "Death of the First Infantryman: Woman Reporter Sees the Battle."⁴⁵

Until the fall of 1950, the mention of Higgins in the press was always in the context of a larger discussion of coverage of the Korean War. In its October 2nd issue, *Life* magazine ran a feature article that focused solely on Higgins, and, as will be discussed below, made her a celebrity.⁴⁶ The article, written and photographed by Carl Mydans, was the length of stories on, and written in the style usually used for, Hollywood stars or other celebrities. Titled "Girl War Correspondent, The New York *Herald Tribune*'s Maggie Higgins is winning the battle of the sexes on the Korean front," the article ran nine-pages and included eight photographs of Higgins. The article began with a three-quarter-page picture of a glamorous, smiling Higgins – not unlike a close-up photo that would be used in an article about an actress. Mydans' other photographs captured Higgins' feminine charms, with a sequence in which she was having her hair cut and other pictures of her smiling at her typewriter. Mydans also caught her pursuing the serious tasks of covering the war, speaking with General Douglas MacArthur and observing a battle. The article covered Higgins' background

⁴⁴ Marguerite Higgins, "Seoul's Fall: By a Reporter Who Escaped," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 29, 1950, 1.

⁴⁵ Marguerite Higgins, "Death of the First Infantryman: Woman Reporter Sees the Battle," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 5, 1950, 1.

⁴⁶ Carl Mydans, "Girl War Correspondent," *Life*, October 2, 1950, 51-60.

and her work during World War II. Mydans also pointed out some of her adventures in Korea, such as her removal by General Walker and her return under the order of General MacArthur, as well as her participation in the amphibious landing at Inchon. While *Life* magazine's photographs portrayed Higgins as a celebrity, the text of the article certified Higgins' new status. Higgins "already has become a legend," *Life* proclaimed, "both in Korea and in the U.S."⁴⁷

In 1954, Keyes Beech, correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News* who covered the Korean War with Higgins, included a chapter on Higgins in his book, *Tokyo and Points East*.⁴⁸ Beech wrote about Higgins' courage in covering the fighting, her confrontation with *Herald Tribune* colleague Homer Bigart, who wanted Higgins removed from the scene so he would be the only correspondent covering the war for the newspaper, and the order by General Walker for her to leave Korea. Beech made two points related to the subject of this study. First, Beech noted that Higgins' gender gave her a competitive advantage in getting information from male sources. He stated this in terms of the natural male response to Higgins as an attractive woman with sex appeal as opposed to the idea that she traded sex for stories.⁴⁹ Beech wrote, "Diplomats and generals had a way of confiding in Higgins that was the despair of her male competitors. General MacArthur, whose age had not dimmed his eye for a pretty face nor withered his old-fashioned gallantry, was no exception."⁵⁰ Second, he provided a perspective on the circumstances of Higgins'

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Keyes Beech, *Tokyo and Points East* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1954), pp.167-82.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.182.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

arrival in Tokyo in 1950 at the time *Shriek with Pleasure* was published. Beech wrote that the similarity of the book's main character, a woman foreign correspondent, to Higgins made correspondents believe that it had been modeled after her. He described the book's characterization of the woman journalist as a "man-eating woman correspondent . . . who acquired most of her stories by happily combining business with pleasure."⁵¹ Beech noted that the tendency by journalists to gossip resulted in the book having a negative influence on Higgins' reputation.⁵²

In the years following the Korean War, Higgins was not the subject of news coverage until 1957. In August of that year Higgins, who was assigned to the *Herald Tribune's* Washington bureau, was criticized by the Standing Committee of Congressional Press Gallery Correspondents for receiving pay in exchange for her endorsement for a brand of toothpaste. Higgins had appeared in advertisements previously, for Hermes typewriters in 1950 and Camel cigarettes in 1954, but that was before she was assigned to the Washington bureau and covered Congress. The Committee had a rule that prohibited reporters from participating in paid publicity or promotion work. Higgins wrote the committee saying that she would withdraw her credentials because she believed the committee was selective in its enforcement, since it did not restrict journalists from participating in paid television news programs. Higgins' press credentials problem became a major story and was covered in *Time*⁵³, *Newsweek*⁵⁴, *Editor and Publisher*⁵⁵ as well as other magazines and newspapers.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.168.

⁵² Ibid., p.169.

⁵³"The Fine Print," *Time Magazine*, November 25, 1957, 70.

⁵⁴ "Tempest in Toothpaste," *Newsweek*, November 25, 1957, 81.

In 1957, Joseph Mathews included a brief mention of Higgins in his book, *Reporting the Wars*. Mathews discussed the fact that following World War I, women began to take positions as war correspondents. While not discussing individual women who took on this job, Mathews made note of Higgins' fame, writing that the "best-known correspondent of the Korean War was the glamorous Marguerite Higgins."⁵⁶ The author apparently thought Higgins' appearance was an important factor in his discussion.

Higgins died on January 3, 1966 and her death received a lot of coverage in the press. The *Herald Tribune*, the paper for which Higgins worked for most of her career, referred to her celebrity in her obituary that stated "more than once [Higgins] became personally entangled in the news."⁵⁷ The newspaper described Higgins' success as coming from "a combination of ambition, determination, imagination and sometimes ruthlessness."⁵⁸ The *Herald Tribune* also honored Higgins with an editorial in which it said that she had the persistence, diligence and ability that were required to be a first-rate reporter.⁵⁹ In the *Herald Tribune*'s employee newsletter, "What's Going On," Higgins was remembered: "Between her good looks and her winsome smile she could melt armor plate, and she used her information-ferreting

⁵⁵ Philip Schuyler, "Pulitzer Prize Winner Writes Toothpaste Ads," *Editor and Publisher*, August 10, 1957, 15.

⁵⁶ Joseph James Mathews, *Reporting the Wars* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), p.255.

⁵⁷ "Marguerite Higgins Obituary," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 5, 1966, 22.

⁵⁸ Jean Franklin, "Marguerite Higgins Obit I, Draft," January 5, 1966, Box 2, Folder 25, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁵⁹ "A Singular Correspondent," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 5, 1966, 22.

talents with ruthless determination.”⁶⁰ The *New York Times*, the newspaper that Higgins competed against during her twenty-one years with the *Herald Tribune*, wrote that Higgins’ success was derived from “a combination of masculine drive, feminine wiles and professional pride. She had brass and she had charm, and she used them to rise to the top of a profession that usually relegates women to the softie beats of cooking, clothes and society.”⁶¹ In the coverage of Higgins’ death by *Time* magazine, she was described as “a driving headstrong girl,” who “used her blonde, blue-eyed charm to get the stories she wanted, a ploy that left some of her male colleagues sputtering with rage.”⁶²

Herald Tribune correspondent Margaret Parton remembered Higgins in her 1973 memoir, *Journey Through a Lighted Room*.⁶³ Parton joined the newspaper the year before Higgins was hired. She recalled Higgins as “still a cub, with carbon splotches on her lovely face and a pencil stuck into her disheveled blond curls – but she was ferociously thorough . . .”⁶⁴ Following Higgins’ assignment to Europe two years later, Parton saw very little of Higgins but she continued to stand out in Parton’s mind as a person whose career had impact on her own.. Parton wrote:

“Early in January 1966 Marguerite Higgins died, and I felt strangely shaken. For twenty years – in the same profession but far more famous than I had ever been – she had been the shadow-dancer on the other side of the

⁶⁰ "What's Going On," (New York: *New York Herald Tribune*, January 7, 1966), 4.

⁶¹ "Marguerite Higgins Dies at 45: Reporter Won '51 Pulitzer Prize," *New York Times*, January 4, 1966, 27.

⁶² "Lady at War," *Time*, January 14, 1966, 61.

⁶³ Margaret Parton, *Journey through a Lighted Room* (New York: Viking Press, 1973).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.75.

screen, the glimpsed figure beyond the looking glass, like mine but not mine at all.”⁶⁵

In the 1968 edition of *Under Fire, the Story of American War Correspondents*, M.L. Stein included Higgins in his chapter, “Ladies on the Front Line.”⁶⁶ The chapter consisted of short paragraphs that described famous women correspondents, including Anne O’Hare McCormick, Dorothy Thompson, Margaret Bourke-White and others. Stein took his material on Higgins from her autobiography, *News is a Singular Thing*.⁶⁷ He adopted several incidents from her book dealing with coverage of World War II and post-war Berlin. One incident was a case in which Higgins’ gender prevented her from access to a news source that was equal to her male colleagues. In this case, Higgins was denied access to an after-dinner discussion with an important official and other reporters, all of whom were males, because the men retired to the library for cigars and brandy, leaving Higgins stranded in the dining room with their wives.

In *Up From the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists*, author Marion Marzolf included a chapter titled, “The Post World War II Pioneers.”⁶⁸ As in the Stein book above, Marzolf devoted a few paragraphs to Higgins, using material taken mainly from her autobiography. The author commented that Higgins had “met discrimination head on”⁶⁹ and withstood charges by her colleagues that she traded on

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.204.

⁶⁶ Meyer L Stein, *Under Fire: The Story of American War Correspondents* (New York: J. Messner, 1968), pp.220-21.

⁶⁷ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*.

⁶⁸ Marzolf, *Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists*, pp.76-78.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.77.

her femininity. Marzolf concluded that Higgins was one of the “new generation” of women reporters who proved to editors that they had the talent and determination to succeed as journalists covering hard news.⁷⁰

In 1980, Marzolf contributed a biographical sketch on Higgins to *Notable American Women, The Modern Period, A Biographical Dictionary*.⁷¹ This article on Higgins is distinguished because it apparently was the first one written about her for which an author did original research. Marzolf obtained information through correspondence with journalists who worked with Higgins, as well as from secondary sources. Marzolf’s primary research was limited, however, as she contacted only eight people (from the *Herald Tribune*, former president Whitelaw Reid, former city editor Lessing Engelking, reporters Richard Tobin, Margaret Parton, Harry Baehr and Louise Fitzsimons; plus Carl Mydans from *Life* magazine and Keyes Beech from the *Chicago Daily News*). Marzolf wrote that Engelking, who hired Higgins, said she was “intensely competitive” and had more “fire and zeal than most.”⁷² Marzolf reinforced Engelking’s sentiments by including a quote from Whitelaw Reid, who said that Higgins “covered the news with single mindedness and determination.” Otherwise, the biographical sketch presented the facts of Higgins’ career from covering World War II in Europe to her work as a columnist for *Newsday* in the years before her death. Regarding the allegation that Higgins used sex to obtain news stories, Marzolf included the statement by Keyes Beech. “Maggie didn’t need to use

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.76.

⁷¹ Marion Marzolf, "Marguerite Higgins," in *Notable American Women: The Modern Period*, ed. Barbara Sicherman and Carol Hurd Green (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1980), pp.340-41.

⁷² Ibid., p.340.

her sex to do a good job as a war correspondent,” said Beech. “She had brains, ability, courage and stamina.”⁷³

Madelon Schilpp and Sharon Murphy devoted a chapter to Higgins in their book *Great Women of the Press*.⁷⁴ They based their chapter on material from Higgins’ books, periodical articles in which she was mentioned and Marzolf’s biographical sketch in *Notable American Women*. As they recounted the main events of Higgins’ life, the authors commented on aspects of Higgins that are important to this study. The authors noted that Higgins was known for “tenacity and thoroughness;”⁷⁵ and that “like other female reporters before and after her, she was accused of getting exclusive interviews merely by batting her eyelashes.”⁷⁶ Schilpp and Murphy noted that Higgins “overcame the jealous sniping of male colleagues who complained that she took advantage of being a woman, but who were unable to offer any proof of their accusations.”⁷⁷ The overall assessment of Higgins by Schilpp and Murphy was that she had stamina, took risks to get stories, and had the temperament to take things in stride to achieve success as a “ground-breaking” reporter.⁷⁸

The year 1983 was a turning point in the historical legacy of Higgins. During the seventeen years since Higgins’ death, with the one small exception of Marzolf’s

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Schilpp and Murphy, *Great Women of the Press*, pp.190-99.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.193.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 196

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.191

⁷⁸ Schilpp and Murphy, *Great Women of the Press*, p.196.

work, what had been written about Higgins primarily was based on her own books. The bulk of what was written concerned her exploits and achievements as a journalist. There were, however, four statements made that perhaps indicated what might lie ahead in terms of a lasting evaluation of her career. While each of these statements appears above in the discussion of the individual work in which it was included, all four are now presented together to demonstrate their cumulative effect. In its obituary of Higgins, the *New York Times* said that she used her “feminine wiles . . . to rise to the top of a profession.”⁷⁹ *Time* magazine’s obituary said that Higgins “ used her blonde, blue-eyed charm to get the stories she wanted, a ploy that left some of her male colleagues sputtering with rage.”⁸⁰ Marzolf wrote, “Colleagues . . . griped about her willingness to trade on her femininity.”⁸¹ Finally, Schilpp and Murphy noted that Higgins “overcame the jealous sniping of male colleagues who complained that she took advantage of being a woman, but who were unable to offer any proof of their accusations.”⁸² None of these statements was attributed to a source. It is likely that they were formed from gossip in the journalism community about Higgins.

In 1983, Antoinette May and Kathleen Keeshen, in their respective book and doctoral dissertation, completed the first works on Higgins based on extensive primary research. May’s *Witness to War*⁸³ was published in the fourth quarter of 1983. The book was published as a popular trade book and, after achieving best-

⁷⁹ "Marguerite Higgins Dies at 45: Reporter Won '51 Pulitzer Prize." *New York Times*, p.27

⁸⁰ "Lady at War." *Time*, p.61

⁸¹ Marzolf, *Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists*, pp.77-8.

⁸² Schilpp and Murphy, *Great Women of the Press*, p.191.

⁸³ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*.

selling status, was reissued in paperback in 1985. Keeshen's doctoral dissertation, *Marguerite Higgins: Journalist 1920-1966*⁸⁴ was approved on July 8, 1983. Both authors developed their material using the books Higgins wrote; the published writing of people who knew and worked with her, such as Keyes Beech, Toni Howard, and others; and press coverage that Higgins received in newspapers and magazines. In addition, both authors conducted original research in the form of interviews with contemporaries of Higgins.

May and Keeshen wrote chronological biographies of Higgins, describing her life from birth to death. While the two authors presented the same historical facts, they did so from very different perspectives. May wrote a popular book, and, together with her editor, fashioned the story of Higgins' life so that it would appeal to a mass audience. May's book focused on the contrasts in Higgins' career. She depicted Higgins' achievements as a young girl and student, yet noted she was disliked for the way in which she accomplished all that she did. May showed Higgins' accomplishments as a professional journalist, yet pointed out that her colleagues made charges that Higgins used unethical means to achieve such success. May described the fame and awards Higgins earned in her career, yet reported that Higgins' colleagues thought that her talent and skills were ordinary. May also focused on controversies in Higgins' life such as the circumstances of her transfer from Berlin to Tokyo, her battle with military officials to cover the Korean War, and her dispute with journalists in Saigon about coverage of the Vietnam War. Finally, May explored Higgins' relationship with the men she loved: her first marriage to a

⁸⁴ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966".

fellow student at the University of California at Berkeley, a serious love relationship Higgins had in Europe during World War II, and the Air Force general whom Higgins married in 1952 and remained with through the rest of her life. In contrast, Keeshen's dissertation is a straightforward presentation of the times, places and events of Higgins' life. The author used this recitation of facts as the basis for conclusions about such topics as the capabilities of women journalists, Higgins' contributions to the advancement of women in the profession, the personal courage and aggressive behavior that led to Higgins' success, and Higgins' strengths and weaknesses as a reporter versus columnist.

The biographies written by these two authors have striking similarities and differences. The similarities can be attributed in large measure to the fact that the authors were working at the same time and drawing from the same pool of resources. The differences likely stem from the fact that May was writing to satisfy as large a segment of the reading public as she could reach, and Keeshen was writing an academic document that had to meet the research standards set forth by her dissertation committee.

However, each of these biographies covered material on factors that relate to subject of this study, Higgins' historical legacy and how it possibly was influenced by gender bias. Following is a summary of how these factors were treated by the two authors.

Aggressiveness. Both authors asserted that the aggressive nature of Higgins' character was seen before she began her professional career at the *Herald Tribune*. For example, without attribution to a source, May made the claim that Higgins tried

to gain an advantage as a reporter for her college newspaper by inaccurately stating to department heads at Berkeley that she was the “only” member of the staff of the *Daily Cal* who could be their “pipeline” to the paper.⁸⁵ Quoting the daughter of a woman who worked with Higgins on the college newspaper, Keeshen wrote that Higgins didn’t respect the “territorial assignments and sensitivities of her fellow reporters.”⁸⁶ May wrote that aggressive behavior by Higgins continued when she was studying at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in 1942. May related an incident described by one of Higgins’ classmates, journalist Flora Lewis. “Once we were given a class assignment to write an editorial on a given subject,” Lewis said. “Somehow Maggie got to the library ahead of all the rest of us and checked out every available resource on the topic.”⁸⁷ Both May and Keeshen wrote about Higgins’ aggressiveness during the period that she was *Herald Tribune* bureau chief in Berlin from 1947 to 1950. May described the competitive stance Higgins took against Drew Middleton, the *New York Times* bureau chief,⁸⁸ and Keeshen described a problem caused when Higgins wrote a story about events that took place in the beat assigned to another *Herald Tribune* correspondent.⁸⁹

Bias. Both authors wrote about how difficult it was for a woman to work as a newspaper journalist during Higgins’ era, quoting professors at Columbia University who knew Higgins. May quoted John Tebbel, who said, “In those days women had

⁸⁵ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.42.

⁸⁶ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.40.

⁸⁷ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.51.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.125.

⁸⁹ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", pp.137-38.

to be tougher to succeed in journalism, a male-dominated and essentially chauvinist business...”⁹⁰ In her dissertation Keeshen quoted Professor John Chamberlain. Reflecting on Higgins’ success in Korea, Chamberlain was quoted by Keeshen as saying that Higgins “had the steel to compete with case-hardened men of the journalistic profession, by digging harder and longer in order to overcome military prejudice against permitting women to report in dangerous places.”⁹¹

May and Keeshen both referred to the incidents of sexual discrimination that Higgins experienced. These included the warning to Higgins by *Time* magazine’s Frank Gibney that “Korea is no place for a woman,”⁹² her expulsion from Korea by General Walker,⁹³ and her assignment to a Navy hospital ship to cover the amphibious assault at Inchon.⁹⁴ Keeshen added another dimension to this topic, however, by presenting bias from the perspective of other journalists. Keeshen quoted Russell Hill, who was head of the *Herald Tribune*’s Paris bureau when Higgins was sent overseas in 1944, as saying that Higgins accepted the fact of discrimination, “especially in war zones, and [Higgins believed] that if she used her sex appeal, she was merely righting the balance.”⁹⁵ Wes Gallagher of the Associated

⁹⁰ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.52.

⁹¹ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.79.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.184; May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.136.

⁹³ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.204; May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.153.

⁹⁴ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.222; May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.167.

⁹⁵ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.108.

Press described Higgins as “the advance of women’s lib.”⁹⁶ *Life* magazine’s Carl Mydans, who photographed Higgins in Korea and wrote the feature article on her for the magazine, thought that Higgins and photographer Margaret Bourke-White faced the problem of bias because they were “blazing new trails” and that each was “attacked with charges, usually behind their backs, of having ‘slept her way to the top.’”⁹⁷ On the other hand, Tania Long Daniell, war correspondent during World War II for the *New York Times*, told Keeshen that, “To her knowledge, women journalists [who were] doing excellent jobs [examples she gave were Dorothy Thompson, Anne O’Hare McCormick and Sonia Tomara] did not run into special problems because they were women.”⁹⁸ Daniell may have been saying indirectly that she didn’t think Higgins was ‘doing an excellent job,’ a distinct possibility since Keeshen pointed out that Daniell did not like Higgins.

Enemies. In her dissertation, Keeshen focused on the fact that many people didn’t like Higgins during her professional career, a point not developed in May’s book. *Herald Tribune* correspondent Sonia Tomara said she was not a friend of Higgins because she thought she was “treacherous.”⁹⁹ Helen Kirkpatrick, correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, was quoted as saying; she “did not like her [Higgins] very much.”¹⁰⁰ As noted above, Tania Long Daniell said she didn’t

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.140.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.220.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.132.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.83.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.101.

know Higgins well, but “... she disliked what little she knew.”¹⁰¹ Russell Hill, who worked with Higgins in Europe, was aware that she was not liked. He told Keeshen his view that the reason for this was “. . . for the most part, because of her ambition and ruthlessness in pursuing a story.”¹⁰²

Sexuality. While Keeshen put effort into developing a broad perspective on gender bias and the related factor that Higgins’ colleagues disliked her, May had more interest in informing her readers of the role that Higgins’ sexuality played in her life. Keeshen touched on this issue as well, but only by way of a brief mention of an incident during Higgins’ freshman year in college in which she apparently expressed her belief in pre-marital sex,¹⁰³ and by discussion of Toni Howard’s steamy novel, *Shriek with Pleasure*, which allegedly was based on Higgins’ life.¹⁰⁴

May established Higgins’ sexuality as a major theme within her biography and developed it through discussion of every stage in Higgins’ life. Quoting childhood friends, May wrote about Higgins’ interest in boys at a very early age,¹⁰⁵ and how she acted on that interest with a male friend.¹⁰⁶ May included a graphic description of Higgins’ body while in high school,¹⁰⁷ and wrote of her sexual

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.132.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.134.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.37.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.176.

¹⁰⁵ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.22.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.38.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.28.

liberation in college.¹⁰⁸ May informed her readers about Higgins' preference in birth control methods¹⁰⁹ and made reference to an abortion.¹¹⁰ May quoted conversations Higgins had with her friends that suggested she welcomed casual sex.¹¹¹ May summarized Higgins' sexuality when she wrote that Higgins was "a woman who did her own choosing;"¹¹² and that "Higgins was known to have loved not only well but also frequently."¹¹³

Lovers. Not surprisingly, May extended her discussion of Higgins' sexuality to an account of her love life. May identified Higgins' lovers starting at the time she was in college.¹¹⁴ Following establishment of the fact that Higgins was married shortly after she joined the *Herald Tribune* in 1942, and that her husband was shipped off to war almost immediately; May gave detailed accounts of Higgins' adulterous affairs with men who worked at the newspaper.¹¹⁵ Writing about Higgins' work in Europe, May included references to three lovers Higgins had while she was assigned to Berlin, and those were in addition to her relationship there with General William Hall, whom she eventually married.¹¹⁶ May also wrote about the sexual relationship

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.37.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.62.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.40.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 101, 103, 117.

¹¹² Ibid., p.57.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.12.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.39.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp.58-60.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 114, 187, 189.

Higgins had with Keyes Beech when they were covering the Korean War.¹¹⁷ And finally, when Higgins was stationed in Washington in the 1960s, May wrote that reporter Peter Lisagor, Washington correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, was “the man many were convinced had been more than a friend.”¹¹⁸

Keeshen, on the other hand, did not research and / or write very much about Higgins’ lovers, other than to quote correspondent Wes Gallagher’s contention that while covering the Nuremberg trial Higgins’ boyfriend was the American-Russian interpreter for the U.S.¹¹⁹

Trading sex. The difference between the treatments by May and Keeshen of Higgins’ sexuality and lovers has important implications regarding one of the allegations made against Higgins that is discussed in this study – that Higgins traded sex for information from news sources. Keeshen primarily wrote about sex in the context of how this aspect of Higgins’ life affected the story of Higgins as a journalist. For example, Keeshen discussed the sexual references made in Toni Howard’s *Shriek with Pleasure* in terms of their resulting influence on the attitudes that Higgins’ colleagues had toward her when she was transferred to Tokyo. Keeshen also wrote about Higgins’ lover during the time of the Nuremberg trials in the context that his job as an interpreter supposedly gave her a competitive advantage over the *New York Times* because of information he had access to.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.184.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.12.

¹¹⁹ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.140.

The discussion of sex and lovers by May, on the other hand, served no purpose other than to paint a picture of Higgins' immorality as it related to sex and marriage. May's portrayal, however, gave weight to establishing credibility for the ethical charge that Higgins traded sex for information. Indeed, May included this charge in her book by using quotes from journalists. Associated Press correspondent Hal Boyle was quoted by May as saying he was "sure she would have [traded sex for a news story] if it had been necessary to get what she wanted," and repeated Boyle's description of Higgins as "a flawless combination of sex and brains."¹²⁰ May quoted both Anne Hunter, correspondent for the *Chicago Times*, and British reporter Judy Barden as saying that Higgins slept with men to get what she wanted.¹²¹

Keeshen, on the other hand, wrote in terms that were less sexually overt about the opportunities Higgins may have had to get news because she was a woman. For example, Keeshen wrote that George Aarons, writer-photographer for *Stars and Stripes*, lamented that because virtually all the military officers in the 1940s and 1950s were men, Higgins had a natural advantage since men preferred her company to that of male journalists.¹²² NBC correspondent John MacVane told Keeshen that it wasn't sex that produced Higgins' news scoops, just good work.¹²³

Stealing Stories. Both May and Keeshen included accounts that Higgins stole material from other reporters and used it as her own. May quoted an unnamed source who worked on the *Daily Cal* with Higgins at Berkeley as saying she stole stories

¹²⁰ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.52.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.102, 118.

¹²² Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.201.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.86.

from her colleagues on the student newspaper on more than one occasion.¹²⁴ May quoted *Herald Tribune* correspondent Don Cook as saying that Higgins stole material when she was stationed in Europe, and related an incident of this type that took place in Berlin that was told to her by *Newsweek* reporter Jim O'Donnell. Keeshen also reached back to Higgins' college days on this topic. Keeshen recounted an incident that occurred in a composition class as she sought to establish a pattern of this behavior by Higgins. Keeshen also quoted allegations by journalist Sonia Tomara Clark that Higgins stole stories, although Clark cited no specific incidents.

In summary, both May and Keeshen portrayed Higgins as an aggressive person who confronted bias in her career. Both authors presented allegations dating back to Higgins' years in college that revealed she appropriated work done by others. They both presented assertions by professional colleagues that Higgins stole news stories. Keeshen's perspective on Higgins was that her shortcomings mirrored her strengths, but it was her courage that established her professional credentials. Higgins' place in history is "a special niche among the world's foreign correspondents" in that she was respected for tenacity, perseverance and drive,¹²⁵ all of which contributed to her success as a war correspondent. In addition, Higgins' career "provides a meaningful perspective for women journalists today and for those who will follow . . ."¹²⁶

¹²⁴ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.42.

¹²⁵ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.9.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

A major difference in the profiles of Higgins presented by the authors was May's emphasis on Higgins' sexual attitudes and behavior and the allegation that Higgins traded sex for news information, a charge that Keeshen did not mention. The fact that May's book was written to appeal to a mass audience and received national distribution and attention, while exposure to Keeshen's work was limited by the awareness of and distribution accorded a dissertation written for academic purposes, has had an important influence on the discussion of Higgins in the literature. The influence of *Witness to War* clearly can be seen in subsequent books published in which substantial attention was given to Higgins.

The influence of May's book first was seen in Barbara Belford's *Brilliant Bylines*, published in 1986. Belford cited *Witness to War* and included a number of its sexual references to Higgins in her eight-page chapter on Higgins, such as the story that Higgins "advocated 'free love' to her sorority sisters."¹²⁷ Belford repeated May's statement that Higgins' "newspaper rivals felt she used unfair methods to achieve her ends."¹²⁸ In an apparent reference to May's book, Belford wrote that following Higgins' death, "Her ambition to be the best has been portrayed as ruthless; her femininity as coy and flirtatious, giving her an advantage over male colleagues, her sexual appetites as greedy and indiscreet."¹²⁹ To her credit, on the other hand, Belford cast a different light on Higgins' historical legacy when she put her life in the context of the 1980s:

¹²⁷ Belford, *Brilliant Bylines: A Biographical Anthology of Notable Newspaperwomen in America*, p.287.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.285.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.284.

“The truth about Maggie Higgins, however, is that today she would not be an oddity, for in the climate of the 1980s her driven personality would be admired, her success would be considered both hard-earned and deserved, her life as a journalist, wife and mother envied and emulated. She wanted everything and set out to get it.”¹³⁰

Concerning Higgins’ work as a war correspondent, Belford concluded, “It was her insistence on taking as many or more risks covering Korea than the bravest of the 130 male reporters that brought her the most criticism.”¹³¹ “She was a great reporter, way ahead of her time.”¹³²

May’s book also had an important influence on Richard Kluger’s *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*,¹³³ which was published three years after *Witness to War*. Kluger was a veteran journalist and the *Herald Tribune*’s literary editor for four years before the newspaper ceased publishing in 1966. *The Paper* is important to this study because, in addition to material on Higgins, it provides a detailed account of the operations, culture, personnel, and decision processes in the newspaper where Higgins worked.

Kluger was very critical of Higgins, picking up the theme of sexual fixation established by May and expanding that to a characterization of a woman who incorporated sexy innuendo or sexual behavior into practically every act. For example, Kluger barely rewrote passages from *Witness to War* that portrayed Higgins as a whirling dervish of sex acts with her male colleagues in the city room of the *Herald Tribune*. He then broadened this characterization with pejorative descriptions

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.285.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., p.292.

¹³³ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*.

such as Higgins “purring” requests and having “useful” lovers.¹³⁴ Kluger promoted the idea that Higgins used sex to obtain news information when he said that she “selected most if not all of her bedmates for intensely practical reasons.”¹³⁵ Kluger took this tack to attack the core of Higgins’ historical integrity when he wrote that Higgins’ use of sex was a “travesty on the goal of emancipation of her sex.”¹³⁶

In addition to his treatment of Higgins’ sexual activity, Kluger covered material on factors related to other aspects of her historical legacy and the question of gender bias. Kluger presented accusations from Higgins’ colleagues that she was overaggressive, manipulative and dishonest. He made reference to Higgins’ days on the staff of the Berkeley college newspaper, adopting May’s characterization of her. Kluger established authenticity for the character profile he used to describe Higgins during the years she worked for the *Herald Tribune* by writing, “... working on the *Daily Californian*, she [Higgins] got a reputation for overaggressiveness,”¹³⁷

Describing Higgins work at the *Herald Tribune*, Kluger wrote:

“Her aggressiveness became an office legend, replete with charges that she stepped on those who got in her way, snatched off desirable assignments, arranged to phone in the legwork of others as if it were her own when out on a team assignment, and otherwise comported herself with a competitiveness bordering on the pathological.”¹³⁸ (Kluger’s statement that Higgins “phone[d] in the legwork of others” is an apparent reference to the Hartford circus fire story that is discussed in the findings of this study.)

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.441.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.440.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.441.

Kluger stated that Higgins' behavior in Berlin led her to being relieved there of the job of bureau chief.¹³⁹ He also repeated allegations that Higgins stole stories from other reporters.¹⁴⁰ He included negative assessments of her professional skills when he wrote that Higgins was a bad reporter¹⁴¹ and not a good writer.¹⁴²

While Kluger drew some of this material from *Witness to War*, he, like May, cited personal interviews as the source of most of his information. Kluger was conducting research for *The Paper* at the time Keeshen was writing her dissertation. During this period Kluger and Keeshen were in contact, a fact that Kluger acknowledged in the "Notes on sources" for the chapter in which he featured Higgins. Kluger wrote, "The author was also aided by advice and information from Kathleen K. Keeshen, then a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland."¹⁴³ Even though his book was not published until three years after the approval of Keeshen's dissertation, Kluger's chapter note suggested that he did not go beyond the information they exchanged to read her entire work. One can question whether a reading by Kluger of Keeshen's less sensational and more substantive account of Higgins' life would have led him to write a more balanced profile of her, as opposed to his incorporation of material from May's book.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.442.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.441.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.442.

¹⁴² Ibid., p.515.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.762.

The next book published that devoted a chapter to Higgins was *Women of the World*, written by Julia Edwards, a former foreign correspondent.¹⁴⁴ In her twelve-page chapter on Higgins, Edwards' primarily focused on the major events in Higgins' professional life that occurred in Europe, Korea and Vietnam and presented Higgins' accomplishments in a very positive way. Edwards gave Higgins credit for bravely going after the stories she reported.

On the other hand, Edwards was very critical of Higgins' personal qualities and natural talent. Edwards summarized this view when she wrote:

“Like Marilyn Monroe, [Higgins] was pretty, talented, sexy, and painfully insecure. Each made a tremendous splash in her profession. Both died tragically when they were much too young. Nobody paid them the respect of attempting to place them in the history of their professions. Marilyn was no Sarah Bernhardt. Marguerite was no Margaret Fuller, neither was an innovative thinker nor a pioneer in her profession.”¹⁴⁵

Edwards attempted to provide some balance to May's portrait of Higgins' infidelity by including references to the personal lives of other female reporters. For example, Edwards wrote that Dorothy Thompson's husband, Sinclair Lewis, found her with a man he accused of being her lover, and that Margaret Bourke-White had an affair with Erskine Caldwell while he was still married.

In 1985 Virginia Elwood-Akers wrote about Higgins in her book *Women War Correspondents in the Vietnam War, 1961-1975*.¹⁴⁶ Elwood-Akers described the inner qualities that she believed were responsible for Higgins' success:

¹⁴⁴ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.191.

¹⁴⁶ Virginia Elwood-Akers, *Women War Correspondents in the Vietnam War, 1961 - 1975* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1988).

“Personally . . . she had been an enigma. She was invariably ladylike and feminine, even when wearing Army fatigues and covered with mud, but her detractors soon discovered that the ladylike exterior covered a strong, tough woman who did not hesitate to put up a fight for something she wanted. Rival reporters found that she could be ruthless when in search of a story.”¹⁴⁷

Elwood-Akers presented Higgins’ role in the controversy concerning news coverage of the Vietnam War by the correspondents stationed in Saigon. The author stated that while Higgins was correct in her analysis of the communist instigation of the Buddhist uprising and the American role in the overthrow of the Diem regime, Higgins held the erroneous view that the U.S. could prevail militarily in Vietnam until her death. Elwood-Akers made a distinction, however, between Higgins’ naiveté on the Vietnam War in general, and the charge made by *New York Times* correspondent David Halberstam that she and other “visiting” reporters were naïve about the situation in Vietnam in 1962. Elwood-Akers noted that Higgins and the other visiting reporters often had more experience than the reporters stationed in Saigon both in covering international conflicts in general and in writing about Vietnam in particular.

In her book, *A Place in the News*, which was published in 1990, Kay Mills discussed Higgins in the context of a woman working in the male-dominated business of journalism. Mills established that Higgins’ early success was the result of hard work and perseverance.¹⁴⁸ Mills wrote, “Marguerite Higgins was competitive and talented, and her colleagues sometimes looked bad in comparison.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.39.

¹⁴⁸ Mills, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Page*, p.85.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.327.

Mills also pointed out that, even with hard work, many women faced other problems, specifically “the question of risks and of charges that a woman got a job or a story on her back.”¹⁵⁰ Mills added that Higgins was one of the woman about whom those charges were made. The author reinforced the charges made against Higgins by quoting British reporter Judy Barden from May’s book *Witness to War*, who said that Higgins “slept around” and did “what she needed to do to succeed.”¹⁵¹ Mills wrote that it “is curious is that women often seem to be the ones punished, questioned, and derailed for transgressions, while the men are considered regular fellows, or sexy devils. The female journalist who got the worst rap was Marguerite Higgins ...”¹⁵²

Betsy Wade, a *New York Times* journalist, characterized what she believed was *Herald Tribune* correspondent Homer Bigart’s attitude about Higgins. Wade compiled and edited the war correspondence of Homer Bigart and published it in the book *Forward Positions* in 1992. In an appendix to the book, Wade described Higgins as a “rival” of Bigart, dating back to the time when they both covered the Korean War for the *Herald Tribune*.¹⁵³ Wade wrote:

“Miss Higgins was a pioneer in working in a field that men liked to think of as their province and she often outmaneuvered most male rivals, who, in prefeminist days, would have preferred her to be shy and confined to the society page, or, as they might have put it, barefoot and pregnant.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.325.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.326.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Homer Bigart, *Forward Positions: The War Correspondence of Homer Bigart*, ed. Betsy Wade (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1992), p.224.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Higgins was mentioned in the book by Maurine Beasley and Sheila Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism*, which was published in 2002.¹⁵⁵ The authors noted that if a woman journalist became well known, she might be charged with using sex to get news. They quoted Kluger's assertion that Higgins had used sex to promote her career. Beasley and Gibbons raised two questions about the use of sex by a journalist. Their first question was one that initially was asked by Kluger. When this is the behavior of a female reporter, is it an act of feminism or an act of betrayal to the goal of women to act and be judged without consideration of their gender? Their second question raised the issue of a double standard. When this is the behavior of a male reporter, would anyone raise a question about his conduct?¹⁵⁶

Beasley and Gibbons also included Higgins in their discussion of the coverage of the Vietnam War. The authors pointed out that Higgins and other women correspondents, such as Georgie Anne Geyer and Dickey Chapelle, had previous experience covering military combat in World War II and Korea. The authors made the point that this experience enabled them to be effective in getting information in a very difficult situation.¹⁵⁷ This point underscored that made by Virginia Elwood-Akers concerning the controversy between experienced reporters visiting Vietnam and the younger journalists who were stationed in Saigon.

¹⁵⁵ Beasley and Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism*.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.18.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.225.

In *Battling for News, the Rise of the Woman Reporter*, published in 1994, Anne Sebba described Higgins as “a pushy American reporter.”¹⁵⁸ Sebba drew material from Higgins’ books, *War in Korea* and *News Is a Singular Thing*. Sebba traced Higgins’ career in detail: sent overseas at the end of World War II, covered the German concentration camps, reported on the Nuremberg trials, worked in post-war Berlin and covered the American airlift, covered the Korean War, and reopened the *Herald Tribune* Moscow bureau.¹⁵⁹ Using material from Edwards, Sebba then raised the question of how much of Higgins’ success was a result of her sex appeal.¹⁶⁰ Sebba also included a paragraph that summarized a number of the allegations that had been made about Higgins. This paragraph contained no attribution by Sebba, although it was linked to a quote from Keyes Beech that came from the Marzolf article on Higgins in *Notable American Women*.¹⁶¹ Beech’s quote was, “Maggie didn’t need to use sex to do a good job as a war correspondent. She had brains, ability, courage and stamina.”¹⁶² The unattributed accusations that Sebba included with Beech’s quote were:

“This extreme competitiveness made her unpopular with colleagues on her own paper and rivals alike. It was one of the factors which led to her posting in Tokyo in 1950 amid a welter of accusations that she slept with men to get her reports, that she pursued fellow correspondents and then stole their stories, or that she hyped her own writing beyond its importance.”¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Sebba, *Battling for News: The Rise of the Woman Reporter*, p.178.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.178-94.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.180.

¹⁶¹ Marzolf, "Marguerite Higgins," p.340.

¹⁶² Sebba, *Battling for News: The Rise of the Woman Reporter*, p.187.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

In her chapter on Vietnam, Sebba used material from Higgins' book, *Our Vietnam Nightmare*.¹⁶⁴ Sebba wrote about Higgins' belief in the government of Vietnamese President Diem, and the controversy that her position created in the early 1960s when the administration in Washington believed that Diem was causing unrest in Vietnam through a policy of religious persecution of the Buddhists.¹⁶⁵

Sebba concluded with a positive assessment of Higgins. She said:

“a courageous competitor who always took as many risks as the bravest men. . . . She broke new ground for women in journalism by insisting on absolutely equal treatment with men After Higgins, there was no longer any story an editor could deny a woman merely on grounds of precedent or danger.”¹⁶⁶

In 1995, John Hohenberg's *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times* was published.¹⁶⁷ Hohenberg stated that Higgins “became the most discussed correspondent of the [Korean] war and one of the most daring.”¹⁶⁸ He discussed the aggressive and daring manner in which Higgins covered the Korean conflict, and noted the order by the Army to remove her from the country and its reversal by General MacArthur. Hohenberg wrote about Higgins' coverage of the Vietnam War and focused on the controversy between the visiting journalists and

¹⁶⁴ Higgins, *Our Vietnam Nightmare*.

¹⁶⁵ Sebba, *Battling for News: The Rise of the Woman Reporter*, p.219.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.191.

¹⁶⁷ John Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.224.

those stationed in Saigon. He quoted Higgins saying: “The reporters here would like to see us lose the war to prove they were right.”¹⁶⁹

That same year Michael Emery wrote, *On the Front Lines: Following America's Foreign Correspondents Across the Twentieth Century*.¹⁷⁰ He covered the Korean War and discussed the role Higgins played in the early days of the conflict,¹⁷¹ her conflict and competition with Homer Bigart,¹⁷² and her report of the landing at Inchon.¹⁷³ Moving on to analysis of coverage of the Vietnam War, Emery recounted the controversy between Higgins and the correspondents in Saigon regarding the characterization of whether the war was being won or lost.¹⁷⁴ Emery characterized Higgins as sassy, bright and controversial, and noted that “she could be as abrasive and opinionated as her male competitors”¹⁷⁵ Emery also noted the controversy over whether Higgins used sex to obtain news stories and included the quote from Keyes Beech in which he stated that this was not true.¹⁷⁶

Mitchel Roth included Higgins in his *Historical Dictionary of War Journalism*, which was published in 1997. Roth’s brief entry covered some of the events of Higgins professional life. He described her personal character as “... prone

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p.273.

¹⁷⁰ Emery, *On the Front Lines: Following America's Foreign Correspondents across the Twentieth Century*.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., pp.94-100.

¹⁷² Ibid., p.102.

¹⁷³ Ibid., pp.115-17.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.142-46, 150.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.98.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.118.

to pettiness and competitive to a fault.”¹⁷⁷ Roth drew his material from Edwards and Kliger.

Nancy Sorel wrote about women war correspondents in World War II in her book, *The Women Who Wrote the War*, which was published in 1999. Sorel focused on the question of Higgins’ character and her relationship with other women correspondents. She wrote: “Maggie was well remembered by her female colleagues. Their lack of enthusiasm owed something to her youth (twenty-four), her half-innocent, half-sexy kind of prettiness, and her wealth of energy at a time when many of them were very tired.”¹⁷⁸ Sorel made a point similar to one that Higgins made about herself when she described the aggressive manner with which she worked when she arrived in Europe at the end of World War II.¹⁷⁹ Sorel wrote that the women disliked Higgins because she violated the unwritten rule that “new arrivals defer to old hands.”¹⁸⁰ Other reasons cited by Sorel as why Higgins’ female colleagues did not like her were that Higgins wasn’t courteous, didn’t have a sense of humor, and didn’t keep herself clean.¹⁸¹ In her notes on the chapter in which she discussed Higgins, Sorel said that the source of her material was May’s book, *Witness to War*.¹⁸² Sorel restated what May wrote about Higgins’ sexual morality, saying that Higgins was unfaithful when she was married and that she used sex to gain news

¹⁷⁷ Mitchel P. Roth, *Historical Dictionary of War Journalism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), p.142.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.321.

¹⁷⁹ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.54.

¹⁸⁰ Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War*, p.321.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p.429.

information.¹⁸³ These “radical views on sex” were another reason Sorel stated that the other women correspondents did not like Higgins.¹⁸⁴

Higgins in Korean War literature.

Not surprisingly, Higgins has been included in some military literature covering the Korean War. In books that focused primarily on military strategy, decisions and actions, not much attention was given to news coverage of the war. In books where it was included, however, it is interesting to note that Higgins frequently was discussed, while seldom, if ever, was mention made of the male correspondents who were her colleagues. The fact that she was a woman, and a beautiful one, was part of the personal stories of some of the soldiers in the war, who made comments that she was a welcome sight in the otherwise bleak and bloody Korean countryside.¹⁸⁵ These accounts, however, made it clear that because she was a woman the soldiers did not always approve of her presence, as evidenced by references that ranged from innocuous incidents of soldiers being embarrassed when she would arrive at a location where they were swimming nude, to hostile confrontations that included sexual insults and crude language.¹⁸⁶ These authors of military history made note of issues that defined Higgins’ experiences in Korea, including the military’s actions to restrict her coverage at Inchon and the Chosin

¹⁸³ Ibid., p.319-21.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., pp.321.

¹⁸⁵ Michael Langley, *Inchon Landing: MacArthur's Last Triumph* (New York: Times Books, 1979), p.102; Martin Russ, *Breakout: The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, Korea 1950* (New York: Fromm International, 1999), pp.353-4.

¹⁸⁶ Donald Knox, *The Korean War. Pusan to Chosin: An Oral History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1985), p.124; Russ, *Breakout: The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, Korea 1950*, pp.353-54.

Reservoir, as well as Higgins' struggle to be judged as competent in the field as any of her male competitors.¹⁸⁷ Most important is that recognition was given to her work as a correspondent, including her early stories of American and South Korean soldiers running from battle, her account of the Inchon invasion and the fact that she uncovered and reported that, when negotiations finally were underway with North Korea, the U.S. command censored information given to journalists.¹⁸⁸

Gender Stereotyping

During her career Higgins was subjected to institutional discrimination by her newspaper and by the military as a result of gender stereotyping. The larger question is whether gender stereotyping by her male colleagues at the *Herald Tribune* and by competing journalists caused them to make biased comments about Higgins in interviews and elsewhere that contributed to the salacious and unethical image that is part of her historical legacy. It is clear from the literature that Higgins engendered high levels of jealousy, resentment and animosity among her colleagues. Is it possible that these attitudes toward Higgins were responsible for a negative portrayal of her that ranges from allegations about her character and lack of ethics to dismissal of the quality of her writing? We can begin to address these questions by examining the literature of psychology, especially the study of stereotypes.

Discussion of the question of the rights of women in American society goes back to Alexis de Tocqueville who wrote that, while America had a unique concept of

¹⁸⁷ Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p.162; Russ, *Breakout: The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, Korea 1950*, p.398; John Toland, *In Mortal Combat: Korea 1950 - 1953* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991), pp.98-99.

¹⁸⁸ Bernard K. Duffy and Ronald H. Carpenter, *Douglas MacArthur: Warrior as Wordsmith* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), p.82; Langley, *Inchon Landing: MacArthur's Last Triumph*, p.76; I.F. Stone, *The Hidden History of the Korean War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1952), pp.316-17.

equality that benefited women, women still could not do the same jobs as men.¹⁸⁹ In fact, a common element of human societies is that women and men perform different tasks, are assigned different rights and privileges, and are subject to different rules of conduct according to their gender.¹⁹⁰ For the most part, societies are patriarchal with “men’s structural control over political, legal, economic, and religious institutions” being virtually universal.¹⁹¹ This is conceptualized in social dominance theory, which explains the nearly universal inequality between men and women and the structure of group stratification in society.¹⁹²

The traditional difference in roles between men and women in society is the basis for stereotyping. Stereotypes result from normal cognitive processes that we use to categorize the world around us. The term stereotype was introduced by journalist Walter Lippman in 1922 to describe the mental pictures that we have of different social groups. In 1969, H. Tajfel formulated a cognitive approach to stereotypes that established the concept in the context of mental categories that we use to bring order to our environment, much like schema. Stereotypes are beliefs or opinions about the attributes that a social group may have, and are held about individuals just because they belong to that group.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Stephen J. Morewitz, *Sexual Harassment and Social Change in American Society* (San Francisco: Austin & Winfield, 1996), p.10.

¹⁹⁰ J.T. Spence and R. L. Helmreich, *Masculinity and Femininity: Their Psychological Dimensions, Correlates and Antecedents* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), pp.4-6.

¹⁹¹ P. Glick et al., "The Two Faces of Adam: Ambivalent Sexism and Polarized Attitudes toward Women.," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 23 (1997): p.120.

¹⁹² F. Pratto et al., "The Gender Gap in Occupational Role Attainment: A Social Dominance Approach.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 72 (1997): pp.37-50.

¹⁹³ American Psychological Association, "In the Supreme Court of the United States," *American Psychologist* 46 (1991): pp.1061-70; Wolfgang Stroebe and Chester A. Insko, "Stereotype, Prejudice,

Since gender is the most fundamental and obvious group to which an individual belongs, it is an initial basis for stereotyping. Research has shown that specific traits, behaviors, roles, occupations, and appearance are found in male and female gender stereotypes. The most widely cited studies of gender stereotypes found two clusters of traits for genders. Women were viewed as communal, and seen as having warmth and expressiveness. Men were described as possessing competence and rationality.¹⁹⁴

Williams and Best discussed implicit personality theory, which states that on the basis of personal experiences, people develop theories about others that are used to explain behavior.¹⁹⁵ Thus, related attributes are used in categorizing women into stereotypes. This enables the identification of subcategories of women stereotypes.¹⁹⁶ Clifton, McGrath, et al. identified primary sub-categories of women stereotypes as being housewife, sex object, clubwoman, career woman, and athlete.¹⁹⁷ Taylor developed subcategories of stereotyped feminine roles that included the nurturing

and Discrimination: Changing Conceptions in Theory and Research," in *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions*, ed. D. Bar-Tal, et al. (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989), pp3-34; Shelley E. Taylor, "A Categorization Approach to Stereotyping," in *Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behavior*, ed. D. L. Hamilton (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1981), pp.83-107.

¹⁹⁴ K. Deaux, "How Basic Can You Be? The Evolution of Research on Gender Stereotypes.," *Journal of Social Issues* 51 (1995): pp.11-20; A. H. Eagly, *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1987), pp.133-39; J.M. Stoppard and R. Kalin, "Can Gender Stereotypes and Sex-Role Conceptions Be Distinguished?," *British Journal of Social Clinical Psychology* 17 (1978): pp.211-17.

¹⁹⁵ J. E. Williams and D. L. Best, *Measuring Sex Stereotypes : A Thirty-Nation Study* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1982), pp.275-95.

¹⁹⁶ J. E. Riedle, "Exploring the Subcategories of Stereotypes: Not All Mothers Are the Same.," *Sex Roles* 24 (1991): pp.711-23.

¹⁹⁷ A. K. Clifton, D. McGrath, and B. Wick, "Stereotypes of Women: A Single Category?," *Sex Roles* 2 (1976): pp.135-48.

mother, the protected princess, the sexually overt seductress, the dangerous iron maiden, the pet or mascot, and the efficient organizer.¹⁹⁸

While the benefit of stereotyping is the function it performs of categorizing our environment, there is a two-fold cost. First, stereotypes over-generalize, often are inaccurate and may not apply to the specific group or individual in question. They result in judgments based on an individual's group affiliation rather than his or her behavior. Second, stereotypes can be the basis for bias against others. Stereotypes easily can turn from a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people to prejudice, meaning a negative attitude held by one social group about the members of another.¹⁹⁹

Stereotypes and prejudice can result in discrimination, which is defined as "any behavior which denies individuals or groups of people the treatment which they may wish."²⁰⁰ On a societal level, the denial of equal treatment is the denial of equal rights. Discrimination at this level includes everything from unequal access to career opportunities to restriction of opportunity based on unequal availability of public facilities, both of which are examples of discrimination faced by Higgins.

Discrimination also involves motivation by one group that is hostile toward another group and can make social or economic gains by discriminating against it. In the case

¹⁹⁸ Taylor, "A Categorization Approach to Stereotyping," pp.83-107.

¹⁹⁹ American Psychological Association, "In the Supreme Court of the United States," pp.1061-70; Stroebe and Insko, "Stereotype, Prejudice, and Discrimination: Changing Conceptions in Theory and Research," pp.8-9.

²⁰⁰ Stroebe and Insko, "Stereotype, Prejudice, and Discrimination: Changing Conceptions in Theory and Research," p.10.

of discrimination brought on by gender stereotyping, this hostility is expressed as sexism.²⁰¹

Because gender is basic to identity, sex is an automatic or default category for stereotyping. Mixing the gender stereotype with the hostility of prejudice and the motivation of discrimination produces sexism - the subordinating and objectifying of women.²⁰² Sexism is defined as “prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviors toward women” based on stereotypes of women and belief that men and women have traditional gender roles.²⁰³ The goal of sexism is to maintain the values of the patriarchy and to preserve the privileges and status of males and traditional institutions.

Conducting this study in the twenty-first century, it is important to consider that sexism has changed greatly since the early 1950’s when Higgins was in Korea. The literature discusses “old-fashioned” sexism as that which was in place thirty or more years ago, and describes this as being overt, blatant discrimination that is based on negative stereotypes of women. While sexism still exists, research shows that attitudes today are not as extreme as they once were.²⁰⁴

Another dimension of sexism that may have affected people’s judgment of Higgins surfaced in the frequent descriptions of her physical attributes in varying

²⁰¹ Carl Friedrich Graumann and Margaret Wintermantel, "Discriminatory Speech Acts: A Functional Approach," in *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions*, ed. D. Bar-Tal, et al. (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989), pp.183-204; Shalom H. Schwartz and Naomi Struch, "Values, Stereotypes, and Intergroup Antagonism," in *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions*, ed. D. Bar-Tal, et al. (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989), pp.151-67.

²⁰² Walter G. Stephan, "A Cognitive Approach to Stereotyping," in *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions*, ed. D. Bar-Tal, et al. (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989), pp.37-57.

²⁰³ Gillem, Sehgal, and Forcet, "Understanding Prejudice and Discrimination," p.55.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

phrases, referring to the fact that she was a young, beautiful blond woman.²⁰⁵

Research has shown that physical attractiveness can be a powerful factor in a wide range of interpersonal judgments because “good-looking people have tremendous advantages over their unattractive counterparts.”²⁰⁶ As stated earlier, the pictorial display in *Life* magazine of Higgins’ good looks was one of the building blocks of her rise to fame in 1950.²⁰⁷

While Higgins’ appearance may have helped her become famous, psychology literature points out that this attribute could have caused her male colleagues to have a low opinion of her professional skills. Heilman and Stopeck found that while good looks enhanced the ability attributions of males, the ability attributions of females were undermined by their good looks.²⁰⁸ Heilman and Saruwatari found that attractiveness was an advantage for a woman only when she was applying for a low level job, as opposed to a disadvantage when she was applying for a managerial position or a position of influence like that of journalist.²⁰⁹ The fact that Higgins enjoyed great success, even though her male colleagues judged that she had low

²⁰⁵ Belford, *Brilliant Bylines: A Biographical Anthology of Notable Newspaperwomen in America*, p.284; Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, p.191; Elwood-Akers, *Women War Correspondents in the Vietnam War, 1961 - 1975*, p.39; Stein, *Under Fire: The Story of American War Correspondents*, p.220.

²⁰⁶ Harold Sigall and Nancy Ostrove, "Beautiful but Dangerous: Effects of Offender Attractiveness and Nature of the Crime on Juridic Judgment," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 31, no. 3 (1975): p.410.

²⁰⁷ Mydans, "Girl War Correspondent." *Life*, pp.51-60

²⁰⁸ Madeline E. Heilman and Melanie H. Stopeck, "Attractiveness and Corporate Success: Different Causal Attributions for Males and Females," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, no. 70 (2) (May 1985): pp.379-88.

²⁰⁹ Madeline E. Heilman and Lois R. Saruwatari, "When Beauty Is Beastly: The Effects of Appearance and Sex on Evaluations of Job Applications and Managerial and Nonmanagerial Jobs," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 23 (3) (June 1979): pp.379-88.

professional skills, logically led to their conclusion that there must be another explanation for her achievements, and their resulting contention that she used sex to her advantage. This conclusion may be supported by findings that men are likely to see sexual motives or intentions in the behavior of women.²¹⁰

Another aspect of stereotyping that is important to this study is its descriptive component, consisting of beliefs held by males about the characteristics that women possess. Through stereotypic beliefs about the characteristics of women, descriptive stereotyping can be the basis for occupational discrimination against women by determining that there is a “lack of fit” between the requirements of a job and a woman’s ability to meet those requirements. It is descriptive stereotyping that has played a major role in preventing women from being hired in traditionally male occupations.²¹¹ For example, even though there was a labor shortage at the outbreak of World War II due to the fact that the Army had drained males from the work force, there was opposition to hiring women in the aircraft, shipping, steel, and other war-related industries because they were judged not to have the necessary physical strength and mechanical ability.²¹²

When women were recruited into the military during World War II, there was concern on part of the public and the military about their being sent to combat zones because of “lack of fit.”²¹³ Similarly, Higgins faced descriptive stereotyping when

²¹⁰ Frank E. Saal and Katherine B. Johnson, "Friendly or Sexy? It May Depend on Whom You Ask.," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 13 (3) (September 1989): pp.263-76.

²¹¹ D. Burgess and E. Borgida, "Who Women Are, Who Women Should Be," *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 5, no. 3 (1999): pp.665-92.

²¹² Morewitz, *Sexual Harassment and Social Change in American Society*, p.10.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p.72.

she asked the *Herald Tribune* editors to send her to Germany to cover the end of the war. In Korea, the military's attempts to expel Higgins from the country and not let her participate in the Inchon landing were based on their beliefs about the characteristics of a woman reporter and her "lack of fit" covering a combat situation.

Descriptive stereotyping is institutionally structured, and thus may not be an act intentionally made to discriminate against women. This approach could be used to argue that in ordering Higgins to leave Korea, General Walton Walker was following organizational guidelines and that his action was not based on prejudice or hostility toward women.²¹⁴ An alternative point of view that includes bias as an element of descriptive stereotyping is that it is a form of protective paternalism that uses males' greater power and authority as the basis for them to see themselves as providers and protectors.²¹⁵

While descriptive stereotyping is based on beliefs about the characteristics that women possess, prescriptive stereotyping consists of beliefs about the characteristics that women should possess.²¹⁶ Prescriptive stereotyping, therefore, prescribes that women should behave in ways that are consistent with these characteristics. This leads to discrimination against women who violate accepted beliefs. When this violation is in the form of a woman seeking or holding a traditionally male job in a male-dominated occupation, the result can be hostility and

²¹⁴ Burgess and Borgida, "Who Women Are, Who Women Should Be," pp.665-92.

²¹⁵ P. Glick and S. T. Fiske, "Hostile and Benevolent Sexism: Measuring Ambivalent Sexist Attitudes toward Women.," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 21 (1997): pp.119-38.

²¹⁶ Burgess and Borgida, "Who Women Are, Who Women Should Be," pp.665-92; Eagly, *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation*, pp.133-39; Gillem, Sehgal, and Forcet, "Understanding Prejudice and Discrimination," pp.55-69; Stoppard and Kalin, "Can Gender Stereotypes and Sex-Role Conceptions Be Distinguished?," pp.211-17.

harassment from male coworkers. The discrimination that results is based on gender prejudice. Further, this prejudice persists even if a female worker demonstrates capabilities equal to male workers, with hostility and harassment continuing unabated.²¹⁷ Prescriptive stereotyping draws its power from the strength of the bond between attributes and judgments. Smith writes that social judgments are created by the selection of information used in making a judgment and by how that information is weighed or modified as it is processed. Smith presents an exemplar-based theory of social judgment that people are perceived and judgments made on the basis of specific attributes, and that these attributes can be associated with expected behavior. The example given is a prejudiced individual seeing a member of an ethnic minority (target person) and expecting that the individual will exhibit hostile behavior. From the perspective of stereotyping, it is important to note that Smith states that the attribute of hostility will be associated with the target person even if no hostile behavior actually occurs.²¹⁸

The anger and resentment that her male colleagues and other journalists felt toward Higgins that was reported in the literature possibly resulted from their view that she violated the prescriptive beliefs of the male-dominated newspaper business and the traditional male domain of war reporting when she requested that the *Herald Tribune* send her overseas during World War II, when she achieved success as a reporter in post-war Berlin and when she became a star war correspondent in Korea.

²¹⁷ Burgess and Borgida, "Who Women Are, Who Women Should Be," pp.665-92; Barbara A. Gutek and Robert S. Done, "Sexual Harassment," in *Handbook of the Psychology of Women and Gender*, ed. Rhoda K. Unger (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001), pp.367-80.

²¹⁸ Eliot R. Smith, "The Role of Exemplars in Social Judgment," in *The Construction of Social Judgments*, ed. Leonard L. Martin and Abraham Tesser (Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992), pp.107-32.

When one sex dominates an occupation as men dominated the newspaper business in the early and mid-twentieth century, it becomes accepted that the occupation is appropriate only for that sex. Even after women were as successful as war correspondents as they were in World War II, the sex bias remained. The insidious nature of gender bias is that success by women, because of male beliefs that women do not have the professional skills to succeed, leads to the conclusion that other factors, such as the use of sex, were responsible for their achievements.²¹⁹ This likely was a contributing factor as to why Higgins was discriminated against in Korea even after the success of her gender in World War II.²²⁰ Psychology literature can provide us with an understanding that the source of the jealousy, resentment and animosity that Higgins' male colleagues harbored toward her was rooted in her success as a war correspondent and their perception that wartime reporting was a male domain. Gillem, Sehgal and Forcet wrote that prejudicial attitudes toward women typically involve stereotypical views of gender and the belief in defined roles for men and women.²²¹ Olarte stated that women violate cultural expectations when their behavior does not conform to traditional feminine norms.²²² The fact that *Herald Tribune* correspondent Homer Bigart held this attitude was clearly expressed when upon hearing that Higgins had borne a child he asked 'who the mother was.'²²³

²¹⁹ Saal and Johnson, "Friendly or Sexy? It May Depend on Whom You Ask.," pp.263-76.

²²⁰ Williams and Best, *Measuring Sex Stereotypes : A Thirty-Nation Study*, pp.275-95.

²²¹ Gillem, Sehgal, and Forcet, "Understanding Prejudice and Discrimination," pp.55-69.

²²² Silvia W. Olarte, "The Female Professional: Parenting Career, Choices and Compromises," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 60 (3) (September 2000): pp.293-306.

²²³ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.448.

One factor that can increase the intensity of punishment for perceived violation of prescriptive stereotyping is whether or not the target person is acting or working alone as a minority in the hostile environment. Solo individuals, such as one member of a different gender in an otherwise homogeneous group, will be a special subject of stereotyping and its consequences. Solo women are stereotyped often with harsh results because, since sex is the basis for the difference, it becomes the basis for explaining their behavior.²²⁴ Where there are fewer women, there is more intense sexual harassment.²²⁵

Hostility toward women who violate prescriptive stereotyping can take a form that is similar to the concept of delegitimization. The male-dominant group acts as the delegitimizing agent acts because it feels threatened in terms of power and jobs. The more the group feels threatened, the more it will try to delegitimize the target. In this dissertation the possibility will be considered that negative and defensive statements made by male colleagues of Higgins were acts of delegitimization in that they met the characteristics of this behavior: there were extremely negative accusations, they were addressed at her behavior that violated norms of the male-dominated industry, her accusers acted with emotion, a dominant culture supported the process, and the accusations focused on specific behavior.²²⁶

Deaux and Major developed a model that describes how gender-related attitudes are transformed into acts of discrimination. The Deaux-Major model has

²²⁴ Taylor, "A Categorization Approach to Stereotyping," pp.83-107.

²²⁵ Morewitz, *Sexual Harassment and Social Change in American Society*, p.81.

²²⁶ Daniel Bar-Tal, "Delegitimization: The Extreme Case of Stereotyping and Prejudice," in *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions*, ed. D. Bar-Tal, et al. (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989), pp.169-82.

three components: the perceiver, who brings beliefs about gender into the situation; the target person, who brings self-concepts and personal goals to the situation; and factors about the situation itself, which make gender more or less salient. Gender belief systems, the stereotypes and gender-role attitudes that filter the way in which women are perceived, are at the center of the model. The belief system of the perceiver influences his actions toward women. Thus, the attitudes about gender in the perceiver's mind are acted out in real situations. The target person also has a set of gender beliefs. In addition, there may be gender issues that are related to the personal goals of the target. Both of these factors affect the attitudes and behavior of the target person. The situation in which the perceiver and target person interact contains factors that make gender more or less salient. For example, if there are few, or only one woman in the situation, or if the situation involves behaviors or occupations that traditionally have been male, then there is greater awareness of the issue of gender.²²⁷ "The more associated a domain [situation] is with men, whether by content, traditional occupancy, or gendered leadership style, the stronger is the tendency to devalue the performance of women relative to men."²²⁸

The roles played by the perceiver, target and the situation in the transformation of a perceiver's gender beliefs into actions can be examined through discussion of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, which typically is defined in terms of behavior, concerns a situation in which "sexuality is in the fore-ground

²²⁷ K. Deaux and M. LaFrance, "Gender," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. S. T. Fiske and G. Lindzey (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), p.789.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.798.

where it is not relevant or appropriate, namely where one works, studies or prays.”²²⁹

First, the perceiver is the initiator of actions based on gender beliefs. Just as men differ in their beliefs, they also differ on their propensity to act. Similarly, some women are more likely to be targets, with age, race, marital status, and position or status relative to the perceiver being determinant factors. Situations in which sexual harassment occurs include those in which women are in a nontraditional job, especially when that job was previously thought to be one that a man holds. In addition, the degree to which the organization in which the perceiver and target work tolerates harassment is a factor.²³⁰

Gender stereotypes have remained relatively constant over time. On the other hand, attitudes toward women shifted between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s. During this time there was a decrease in the traditional, conservative views of the roles and rights of women, and this change continued into the 1990s. The change in these general attitudes in society has enabled the distinction to be made between ‘old-fashioned sexism’ and ‘modern sexism.’ Old fashioned sexism is based on beliefs in traditional roles and rights of women and holds the view that women are less competent. Modern sexism rejects beliefs in female inferiority and takes the position that discrimination is no longer a problem. However, modern sexism is expressed through negative attitudes men have about women who continue to make demands that these men believe are motivated by women’s beliefs about gender inequity in the

²²⁹ Ibid., p.811.

²³⁰ Ibid., pp.813-14.

workplace, the political arena or in the media. Just as in the case of old-fashioned sexism, modern sexism can result in hostile behavior by men toward women.²³¹

Conclusion

The historical legacy that Higgins described for herself in her books was that she was courageous, strong, independent, hard working, and smart. One aspect of what was written about her by other authors supports that view. The literature provided unambiguous, substantial documentation of Higgins' extraordinary work as a war reporter and foreign correspondent, as well as of the contribution she made to the cause of insisting that equal opportunity be given to women journalists. Further, a clear picture was developed in the literature of the personal qualities Higgins possessed that enabled her to be successful. These not only included the skills required of an effective reporter, but also the strength of character that enabled her to overcome the barriers she faced, as well as the intellectual capacity to see and communicate the issues behind the events she was reporting.

The literature also described the social and cultural environment that Higgins, as a woman journalist, faced in the pursuit of her career. The discussion of 'old-fashioned' versus 'modern' sexism indicated that the attitudes toward women were more negative and there were fewer opportunities in all segments in society in 1950 than there are today. The literature of gender bias suggests that barriers faced by a women war correspondent were a product of the paternalistic discrimination by the military.

²³¹ Ibid., p.797.

The second aspect of what was written about Higgins is the allegations made about the moral and ethical character of her behavior. We saw that May and Keeshen introduced a whole new dimension into Higgins' written legacy in 1983. These two authors described the aggressive behavior of Higgins and supported this characterization with specific attributions. Keeshen offered evidence that Higgins' professional colleagues did not like her. Both authors included allegations that Higgins stole stories from other reporters and filed them as her own. And, while both authors made reference to Higgins' lovers, it was May who made sexuality such an important part of her character description of Higgins, dwelled on details of her sex life, and made the specific charge that Higgins traded sex for news information.

The literature review showed the large influence that May's book, *Witness to War*, had on Higgins' written historical legacy, particularly regarding sexual allegations. May was quoted or cited as the source by Belford, Kluger, Edwards, Mills, and Sorel when they wrote about sexual conduct or allegations of trading sex by Higgins.

A major finding from the literature review was that it revealed the "trickle down" effect on subsequent authors of the material presented by May. While Kluger did primary research for his book, his writing about Higgins' sexual behavior was influenced by May. The authors Edwards, Mills, Beasley and Gibbons, and Roth then cited Kluger on the subject of Higgins' sexual behavior and other allegations against her in books they subsequently wrote. The third author whose book had an influence on subsequent writing about Higgins was Edwards, who cited both May and

Kluger in her book, *Women of the World*. Sebba and Roth then cited Edwards in their discussion of or reference to Higgins' sexual behavior.

Four points made can be drawn from this analysis that have significant importance to this study of Higgins' written historical legacy and the question of the influence of gender bias. First, Keeshen's dissertation was completed at the same time May's book was published. While it also included allegations about Higgins' behavior, it provided a more balanced view supported by thorough research that included specific attributions of sources of the charges made. As an influence on Higgins' legacy, however, the balanced view presented in this academic study was completely overshadowed by the popular book written by May. Second, the professional backgrounds of May, Kluger and Edwards are in journalism, not academia, yet their work has had a major influence on books published by journalism historians. Third, May, Kluger and Edwards were journalism colleagues of Higgins. To the degree that their personal experiences and / or relationships with Higgins can be determined, this understanding is helpful in assessing their work. Fourth, independent corroboration of the allegations of these authors are needed to the extent possible to determine their own biases.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine the historical legacy of Higgins and determine the degree to which that legacy may have been affected by gender bias. This is a qualitative study that explicates Higgins' historical legacy, identifies factors that contributed to the structural components of her historical image, analyzes the underlying reasons for the development of those contributing factors, and focuses on those factors related to gender bias. Thus, the study considers gender bias in the context of the overall set of forces that shaped Higgins' legacy.

The ingredients from which Higgins' historical legacy was created are the factual events of her life, the attitudes and judgments of those who knew and worked with her, the expression of those attitudes and judgments of her peers' in written and oral interviews, the record of her life as written by scholars and other authors, the process by which those authors developed that written record, and the attitudes, biases, or motivations of those authors that they expressed in their writing. This study will include each of these ingredients in its analysis.

Startt and Sloan, in *Historical Methods*,¹ a text on the theory and fundamentals of communications research, anchor their discussion in the concept of history itself. The pursuit of history is the seeking of an explanation of the events and people of the past. The task of historical research is to reconstruct the earlier period under examination from the perspective of its time. By searching for the true facts of

¹ James D. Startt and William David Sloan, *Historical Methods in Mass Communication* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989). See Chapter 1, pp. 1-14.

a past situation or the true character of a historical person, the process of historical research contributes to the accurate record of human experience.

Communications is as much a part of history as are any of the social sciences. Communications history provides an understanding of the events and people that influenced the media at the time under investigation. Communications research attempts to establish an accurate historical record, or fill in gaps in the understanding that currently exists.

Following the approach of Startt and Sloan, the research objective of this study was to find material that could inform the study on the subjects of Higgins' life, the culture and operations of the New York *Herald Tribune* and the people who worked at the newspaper during the time of Higgins' career, and the lives and careers of journalists who worked with other news organizations and knew Higgins.

To identify published work on this dissertation topic, bibliographies and journal and periodical indexes and abstracts were searched for topics ranging from Higgins herself, to women journalists, war correspondents, the Korean War, and the names of important journalists who knew and worked with Higgins. In addition, bibliographies and notes on sources were studied for references to known works, such as Richard Kluger's *The Paper*, a history of the *Herald Tribune*, and Kathleen Keeshen's doctoral dissertation on Higgins; as well as to other publications that contained relevant material.

The research for this study was undertaken with the goal of finding archival material of relevant individuals and, since the *Herald Tribune* ceased publication in 1966, a source of historical information about the newspaper. Thus, the research task

was to conduct an organized search for archival material. The locations of several critical collections were known because of the research of previous authors. For example, it was known that Higgins' papers were housed at the E.S. Bird Library at Syracuse University; and the papers of members of the Reid family, which owned the *Herald Tribune*, were housed at both the Library of Congress and the Sterling Library at Yale University. In addition, it was known that Kluger had donated his interview notes and other material used in writing his book to Yale University. Additional archive collections were identified through archival directories and guides as well as through Archives USA, which is available on the Internet. The archive search was conducted on the basis of both names of known individuals and keyword searches of relevant categories. Finally, when archive collections of important individuals were identified, requests were made for finding aids from the institution holding the collection.

Foundation.

The foundation of Higgins' historical legacy was the content of the texts written about her. Therefore, this study examined the texts that Higgins wrote herself and those that were written about her; as well as texts that were written about women journalists that included discussion of Higgins. The material selected for analysis included articles written about Higgins in periodicals as well as books in which she was either sole subject or was featured prominently – in the time frame that began when she was working as a journalist and has continued to the present time. As for Higgins' own writing, in addition to the books that Higgins wrote, analysis also was

conducted of the news reports written by her that were published in the *Herald Tribune*.

Primary research.

Journalists.

This study examined archival material to identify information that informs the analysis in two ways. First, the research has been conducted to identify facts that contribute to the understanding of Higgins' character, attitudes of her contemporaries and significant events in her life. Second, archival data has been used to confirm, add insight to, and / or contradict the legacy of Higgins that was written by scholars and other authors.

Archival collections were selected on the basis of the degree to which they contained documents that informed this study. The collections examined included the papers of Higgins herself, those of people who worked with her at the *Herald Tribune*, and those of journalists at other news organizations who knew Higgins. Some of the collections considered for analysis were accepted or rejected on the basis of examination of finding aids. For example, the papers of journalist Margaret Parton, a contemporary of Higgins at the *Herald Tribune*, were not examined. A review of the finding aid for her the collection of her papers at the University of Oregon revealed that Higgins does not appear in the name index. The same determination was made regarding the collection of the papers of journalist Sonia Tomara Clark at the University of Wyoming and the papers of Dorothy Thompson at Syracuse University.

The author traveled to the sites of the collections that were selected to conduct the research. Because each of the archival collections was of papers of an individual who knew or worked with Higgins directly, and included the papers of Higgins herself, in most of the collections the author conducted a file-by-file, document-by-document search for information relevant to the topic of the study. This approach was taken even in the examination of large collections, such as those of Higgins and Kluger, because the central subject of the collection so closely matched the research objectives of this thesis. In collections that were more dispersed in their subject matter, such as those of Helen Rogers Reid and Ogden Reid that included large amounts of material related to the *Herald Tribune* that was not relevant to Higgins, files were selected for examination that the author felt might hold information important to the study. The author examined files that pertained to Higgins herself, places and events in which Higgins was or could have been involved (for example, files on foreign correspondence), and people who Higgins knew or worked with (for example, war correspondent Homer Bigart or the bureau chiefs she worked with).

The collections of archival material examined for this study were:

- Marguerite Higgins – Special Collections Research Center, E.S. Bird Library at Syracuse University

Higgins' extensive archive collection (twenty-three linear feet) was a valuable source of information for this thesis. The collection included subject files of correspondence related to her career, personal records and correspondence, and her writing. In addition to many insights into Higgins' personal and professional experiences, the collection yielded new information

about the reasons for Higgins' behavior, and new understanding of how Higgins managed her career and how that affected her relationship with her employer and colleagues.

- Helen Rogers Reid – Library of Congress

Reid was owner of the *Herald Tribune*, who held various executive positions with the newspaper. As a feminist, she was important to the promotion of the career of Higgins and other women at the newspaper. Her archive collection contained correspondence and speeches that provided valuable information about the relationship she had with Higgins. In addition, her papers included materials that gave insight into management issues at the newspaper that affected Higgins' career.

- Ogden Rogers Reid – Sterling Library at Yale University

Reid was the son of Helen Rogers Reid and served as president of the *Herald Tribune* from 1955 until the newspaper was sold in 1961. His archive collection contained contracts and correspondence that provided insight into management oversight of Higgins and the relationship that Higgins had with executives at the newspaper.

- Joseph Newman – Wisconsin Historical Society, University of Wisconsin

Newman was a foreign correspondent for the *Herald Tribune*. He played a prominent role in Higgins' history in that he replaced her in Germany when she was transferred from Berlin to Tokyo. Newman's archive collection included correspondence not previously published that contradicts the accounts of this period in Higgins' life that have been published.

- Homer Bigart – Wisconsin Historical Society, University of Wisconsin

Bigart worked for the *Herald Tribune* for twenty-five years, mostly on foreign assignments and as a war correspondent. Bigart covered the Korea War with Higgins, where he feuded with Higgins after unsuccessfully trying to get the newspaper to remove her from the war zone. Bigart's archives included personal letters in which his comments about Higgins revealed his attitudes toward her as well as the degree of misunderstanding about Higgins' behavior that existed among the newspaper's staff.

- Joseph Barnes – Oral History Collection, Columbia University

Barnes worked for the *Herald Tribune* for fourteen years, starting as copyboy in 1934 and rising to the position of foreign editor by the time he left the paper in 1948. Barnes was foreign editor during the years that Higgins was in Europe. His oral memoir of his years at the newspaper provided contextual insights into the operations of the *Herald Tribune* and his first-hand observations about Higgins' character and career.

- Ruth Cowan – Oral History Project, Women's National Press Club

Cowan covered World War II for the Associated Press. The oral memoir of her experiences included accounts of gender bias that she experienced early in her career and during the war. Cowan's experiences provide context for the bias that Higgins confronted.

- Judith Crist – Special Collections Research Center, E.S. Bird Library
at Syracuse University

Crist was a reporter who worked at the *Herald Tribune* during the years that Higgins was with the newspaper. Authors who have written about the newspaper and

Higgins frequently have quoted Crist. Her archive collection provided some contextual material about the *Herald Tribune*.

- Helen Kirkpatrick – Oral History Project, Women’s National Press Club

Kirkpatrick covered World War II for the *Chicago Daily News*, and knew Higgins in Europe. Her oral memoir includes information on industry bias against women, and provides context for that experienced by Higgins.

- Harold Boyle – Wisconsin Historical Society, University of Wisconsin

Boyle worked for the Associated Press, and knew Higgins both in Europe and in the Far East. In written accounts of Higgins’ experiences Boyle was sometimes quoted. His archive collection provided documents that give information on the attitudinal and physical environment in which Higgins worked.

Authors.

Examination also was made of archival material of two authors who wrote about Higgins. Analysis of these collections yielded additional material about Higgins’ character, attitudes, and events in her life. In addition these collections gave a new perspective on Higgins’ legacy by providing an understanding of the attitudes about Higgins of two influential authors who wrote about her.

- Richard Kluger – Sterling Library at Yale University

It is important to make special mention of the contributions to this study from the Richard Kluger Papers because their importance was second only to the papers of Higgins herself. In the early 1980s, while doing research for his book, *The Paper, the*

Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune,² Kluger contacted every journalist and management person still living who had worked at the newspaper, as well as contemporary journalists and newspaper executives. The result of this extensive research is a manuscript collection of over thirty boxes and 550 files.

When Kluger wrote to journalists and others, or interviewed them directly, he used a relatively standard set of questions. One that almost always was included was to ask for reminiscences of the "characters" of the *Herald Tribune*. When this question was asked, Kluger usually suggested Higgins as an example. Thus, in the interview notes and written responses in his files, there is an enormous amount of material about Higgins. In his book, however, Kluger mentioned Higgins on only fourteen pages. The result is that the majority of the material collected by Kluger about Higgins was not used by him in his book. Researching Kluger's files for Higgins material produced over one hundred citations for this study that do not appear in his book.

- Julia Edwards – Wisconsin Historical Society, University of
Wisconsin

Edwards wrote *Women of the World*,³ a book that has been very influential in the shaping of Higgins' legacy. Edwards' archive collection contained correspondence that provided information on bias against women journalists, as well as her own attitudes about Higgins – attitudes that affected her treatment of Higgins in her book.

² Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*.

³ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*.

In addition, primary research included direct, personal contact by the author with the following people:

- Judith Crist – interview

Crist was the only colleague of Higgins who was living and available for interview by the author. The interview provided new insights into gender bias attitudes and issues related to allegations that Higgins' behavior was unethical.

- Andy Rooney – correspondence

Rooney, also with CBS News, knew Higgins in Europe during and after World War II. His correspondence provided insights into the behavior and attitudes of Higgins and other women reporters at that time.

- Judy Canter – correspondence

One of the issues raised in this thesis about the shaping of Higgins' legacy is the credentials of Antoinette May, author of a biography of Higgins that influenced subsequent authors. Canter is the Library Director of the *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper, with which May is associated, and provided information on May's background.

- Antoinette May – correspondence

May corresponded with the author of this thesis providing information on her background that gives insights into her credentials as the author of Higgins' biography.

- Roger Mudd – correspondence

Mudd, a former CBS News correspondent, was working in Washington at the time Higgins was assigned to the *Herald Tribune* bureau there. He provided insight into Higgins personal characteristics.

- Paul Duke – correspondence

Duke was one of several journalists contacted who began their careers in the 1940s, a few years following the start of Higgins’ career. Duke provided information regarding employment opportunities for women in journalism at the time.

- Katrina J. Lee – correspondence

Lee is a San Francisco based attorney who, as an undergraduate at the University of California at Berkeley wrote for the *Daily Cal*, the student newspaper. Higgins attended the same university and wrote for the newspaper as well. In 1999, Lee wrote an article about Higgins for the newspaper’s alumni newsletter and interviewed several people (now deceased) who worked with Higgins on the newspaper. Lee provided her recollections of her interviews, including information that contradicts previously published comments from other classmates of Higgins.

- Aaron Schildhaus – correspondence

Schildhaus is an attorney whose practice involves intellectual property. He provided an opinion on the issue of possible defamation related to a novel written in 1950 that was rumored to be based on Higgins’ life.

Research Design.

Once the information was obtained from published work, archival material, correspondence, and interview, the author conducted an analysis of each text to (a) locate information relevant to Higgins’ legacy – her character and significant events

in her life, and (b) locate material related to the attitudes and behavior of others toward Higgins that may have involved gender bias. Several questions were used in this analysis: To what time period in Higgins life or career does the information make reference? What event in Higgins' life or allegation about Higgins' behavior does the information address? Does the information make attribution to a source, and if so, to whom? What is the meaning in the text in terms of Higgins' legacy as related to gender bias?

Every element of information collected was cataloged by the author on the basis of descriptive criteria: its source, the period in time to which the subject matter referred, the date the information was published (if it had been published), the date an interview was conducted or an original document was written, the attribution that the information gave as its source, the subject matter of the information, and a summary and / or quotation of the information content. Using these descriptive criteria, each element of information was entered into a database that could be manipulated for use in analysis. The master database included both information that was published in Higgins' written historical legacy and obtained through research into primary source material. The database was then used to identify consistencies and inconsistencies between the historical legacy and the findings of this study.

The database material was used in an analysis of the underlying factors that shaped Higgins' historical legacy. The analysis of these factors was made in four steps. First, the forces that shaped Higgins' written legacy were examined to determine what factors existed that could have influenced what the scholars and other authors wrote. The focus was to identify the authors who had the most influence on

Higgins' written history, understand the credentials of those influential authors and explore possible biases that these authors brought to their writing. Second, the analysis examined Higgins' historical legacy in light of new information that was identified through primary research. This step examined the information used by the authors who wrote about Higgins. Where possible, an assessment was made of the credibility and / or bias of the information sources. Did they have first-hand knowledge of the information they offered? Did they have other agendas or bias? The research findings were examined to determine whether additional information existed that confirmed or contradicted statements made about Higgins by sources. Third, the charges and allegations made about Higgins, as discussed in the literature review, were evaluated in the context of research findings. Thus, the findings and analysis were organized around key assertions by sources that have been included in Higgins' written history and become a part of her legacy. The last section of the analysis focused on specific examples of biased attitudes and behavior uncovered in the findings that have not been included in Higgins' legacy.

CHAPTER 4. HIGGINS' EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS

Growing up.

The roots of Higgins' awareness of and interest in the world at large that motivated her career in journalism extended back to her early childhood. During the first five years of her life she was shuttled between Hong Kong, where her parents lived, and France to visit her mother's family.¹ Higgins was born in Hong Kong on September 3, 1920, where her father's job had taken her parents following the World War I. Lawrence Higgins worked as the assistant freight manager for the Pacific Mail Steamship Company.² When Higgins was five her family moved to Oakland, California, and her father became a stockbroker. Four years later Higgins' father lost his job in the 1929 Wall Street crash.³ To support his family he took a position as a manager at a local company. The Higgins family lived in a two-story bungalow on a street named Chabot Court. The families who lived there had two things in common, young children and not much money. Higgins described the physical and economic environment on Chabot Court as a "neat little row of lawns and neat little row of people, where women worried about their husband's jobs and men worried about insurance."⁴

Throughout her career, Higgins was seen by some to have been a cold and calculating person. It is possible that early childhood experiences at home

¹ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.35.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p.17.

⁴ Ibid.

contributed to development of a personality that could have been interpreted in these terms. Experiences at home on Chabot Court instilled in Higgins a capacity to be determined and single-minded, sometimes to the exclusion of whatever was going on around her. Higgins traced this characteristic to the times she had to deal with her mother's volatile French nature and her father's Irish temperament.⁵ She wrote that the frequent family crises brought about by one or both of her parents resulted in her developing a "numbness" to emotional storms surrounding her. To those outside the family, Higgins' behavior during these crises were seen as a flaw in her character. "To the people on our block," Higgins wrote, "this numbness made me seem a hardhearted, cold child."⁶ To the contrary, Higgins saw this aspect of her personality as a pragmatic lesson learned by her as a child. The example she used was an incident that occurred during one of her mother's frequent fainting spells, which took place at a party in front of the neighbors. Having seen this behavior on many occasions, Higgins wrote that, rather than excitedly running to her mother's prone body, she quietly and without emotion left the room. Higgins explained:

"To the neighbors my calm exit was quite naturally a source of considerable talk. But the fact was that I had seen mother's faint coming on from across the room. I knew that the only thing to do was get the ammonia. It was toward the kitchen and the ammonia that I was headed."⁷

Lawrence Higgins had an enormous influence on his daughter. Her judgment of the life her father chose was a strong motivation for her to reach beyond traditional, American mainstream values. Her father, Higgins wrote, endured the

⁵ Ibid., p.30.

⁶ Ibid., p.32.

⁷ Ibid., pp.32-3.

“flabby routine of his petite bourgeois life in Oakland California, a city noted for neither character or excitement.”⁸ But Higgins also remembered that her father told her where another life could be found. As a child Higgins listened to her father’s tales of his exploits in World War I, first as an ambulance driver and then a pilot. She saw that these stories made her “father’s eyes shine with emotion . . . as he talked of the days on the Marne, of the Rhine, of the flights over the Rhine, and of Paris. Always of Paris.”⁹

Archival research for this study found an interview of Higgins’ mother and father that has not been published. In 1953, *Time* magazine’s Jane Estes did research for a personality profile of Higgins and conducted the only known interview of her parents.¹⁰ While May and Keeshen interviewed children of Higgins’ childhood friends for insights into her character, the Estes interview provides direct information about her from the two individuals who knew her best. Estes wrote:

“[Higgins] parents have been a profound influence on her, not just in the ‘stage mother’ sense of smothering supervision, but in a philosophy they seemed able to instill into her. Her father says ‘From the time she was a little girl, I tried to make her realize that she need never fear anything or any individual . . . that she should always be able to stand on her own feet. As a result she developed great confidence.’”

Higgins’ work in journalism began when she was a student at the University of California at Berkeley and joined the staff of the student newspaper, the *Daily Cal*. Even as a student-journalist, Higgins took her father’s advice to heart, and pursued stories without trepidation. Her father told Estes that while Higgins was still at

⁸ Ibid., p.26.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Jane Estes, "Memo to Tom Colman," January 12, 1953, Box 6, File 124, Richard Kluger Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven CT.

Berkeley she wanted to interview a Navy admiral about a recent incident. “She called him up [at his hotel], was told he was eating breakfast and she said imperatively, ‘Well, just page him then.’ The admiral left his breakfast and she got her story.”¹¹ Later, as a cub reporter at the *Herald Tribune* she managed to get past security guards at New York City’s Waldorf Towers on two occasions, getting interviews with Madame Chiang Kai-shek and James Caesar Patrillo, head of the musicians union.¹¹ Higgins’ approach to these situations reflected the values her parents instilled in her as described by *Time* magazine’s Estes. “Her mother and father liked her to make up her mind what she wanted to accomplish,” Estes wrote, “and then go ahead and do it.”¹²

The interview of Higgins’ parents by Estes provided the most direct insight we have into one of the characteristics of Higgins that became an important part of her historical legacy. She quoted Higgins’ father:

“Marguerite is not so much competitive, as she is a perfectionist. There was only one place for Marguerite and that was the top, regardless as of what she was doing ... learning to swim, to play the violin or whatever she went into. But it was strictly for her own satisfaction, not to beat somebody else out.”

In sharp contrast to the middle class environment on Chabot Court, Higgins attended one of the most exclusive private schools for girls in California, the Anna Head School. It was a school for the very rich. Higgins’ classmates included children whose families owned Hills Brothers Coffee and the Dollar Steamship Company. Anna Head was a boarding school, and attracted most of its clientele from as far away as New England. Higgins was not a typical student because she

¹¹ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, pp.49-51.

¹² Estes, "Memo to Tom Colman."

commuted from the other side of Oakland, which figuratively was the other side of the tracks to many of her classmates. Her enrollment there was due to her mother. Higgins' mother was raised in Lyon, France and still spoke French fluently. As Higgins reached high school age, her mother found a way to use her language skill to provide the excellent education that she wanted her daughter to have. Mrs. Higgins struck a deal with the principal of the Anna Head School to teach French in exchange for tuition for her daughter.¹³ While many children might be content to simply accept a special educational opportunity due to the labors of a parent, in Higgins' case it awakened a value central to her character – her serious, industrious approach to whatever she did. “It was at [private school],” Higgins wrote, “that getting good marks, excelling at sports, and generally justifying my free education became a *real business* [italics mine].”¹⁴ In later years, Higgins was intense and hard working, and her remark suggests that this serious approach to life began very early.

Attending the University of California at Berkeley, Higgins reached beyond the political and social values of her parents in her attempt to establish her individual identity. Like many people in the academic community during the late 1930s, she became interested in communism. She met Stanley Moore, who was pursuing a doctorate degree in philosophy while she was an undergraduate. Moore, whom she married a year after being graduated from Berkeley in 1941, was a Communist.¹⁵ While Higgins never joined the Communist party, she shared with Moore a belief in a world with a different social order than existed in America in the early 1940s. In a

¹³ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.26.

¹⁴ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.39.

¹⁵ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.37.

letter to her parents at the time of her wedding, Higgins wrote, “The best world is one where both Negro and Jew and Rockefeller and Roosevelt have a chance at enough to eat, a chance at assimilating culture and art and happiness or at least a fair share of them. . . .”¹⁶

While at Berkeley Higgins exhibited anti-establishment behavior. She abandoned her sorority and the community it provided and is known to have associated with anti-establishment figures. Higgins spoke at a campus rally to oppose the draft of college men into the military. In the face of the international aggression that was taking place in Europe, Higgins complained in her campus speech that it was the military that decided “what wars are good. The little people only fight them.”¹⁷ It was also at this time that Higgins’ reputation for being a sexually liberated woman first surfaced. College sorority sisters are quoted by Higgins biographer Antoinette May as saying she “had discovered Bertrand Russell and free love”¹⁸

After graduation in 1941, Higgins got a job as a cub reporter for the *Vallejo Times Herald* in California.¹⁹ Working as a reporter in a small town south of San Francisco didn’t satisfy Higgins’ career ambitions. She then moved to New York, hoping to land a job at one of the major papers. To Higgins, journalism, and especially foreign reporting, “symbolized the epitome of excitement and

¹⁶ Marguerite Higgins, "Letters to Parents," 1942 - 1944, Box 8, Correspondence, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁷ Marguerite Higgins, "Speech at University of California at Berkeley," 1936-1938, Box 8, Miscellaneous, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, pp.33-38.

¹⁸ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.37.

¹⁹ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.15.

adventure.”²⁰ She soon learned, however, that her vision was not going to be easy to achieve since it was hard it was to break into the ranks of metropolitan newspapers. Unable to find work as a reporter, Higgins managed to get accepted at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in the class of 1942. That in itself was a major accomplishment because the application deadline had passed. In addition, only a dozen places were open to women students in the fall term of 1941, and all of those places had been filled. Unwilling to give up on her desire to attend Columbia, Higgins decided to try anyway. Higgins managed to assemble all the required records and recommendations from California and have them delivered to New York in the four days remaining before the school year began. Higgins needed luck too, and got that, when one of the accepted women applicants dropped out at the last minute, freeing up a space for her.²¹

A fellow student with her at Columbia recalled many years later that Higgins chose to live in Greenwich Village rather than in upper Manhattan where Columbia is located. Thus, Higgins selected a more bohemian lifestyle than that chosen by her peers who lived in apartments more convenient to the university. Her roommate in her Greenwich Village apartment was an artist, and with her Higgins went to parties attended by composers, musicians and playwrights.²² The late 1930s and early 1940s were the peak years of the bohemian movement. The roots of this alternative culture had been planted years earlier in the places where Higgins lived, first in San Francisco / Berkeley where she went to school and later in Greenwich Village. Those

²⁰ Ibid., p.16.

²¹ Ibid., p.23.

²² Higgins, "Letters to Parents."

who chose to embrace elements of the bohemian life were more sexually liberated, less bound to traditional institutions like marriage, and more open to living lives based on their own pursuits rather than conforming to the rules of others. Higgins obviously was attracted to this lifestyle.

While at Columbia, Higgins was hired as a stringer for the New York *Herald Tribune*. “Stringer” positions were what newspapers offered to students. As a stringer, Higgins could cover any story she wanted and then submit it to the paper. If a story was accepted, she was paid based on the length of the article.²³ While not a real job, the stringer arrangement provided a way to get started in the newspaper business. By the time Higgins finished her studies at Columbia University in 1942, the war had changed the outlook for women in journalism. The army had taken so many men that opportunities were opening up for women. The *Herald Tribune* brought her into the city room as a full-fledged reporter.²⁴ She entered a newspaper that was facing management challenges and an industry that had a long history of discrimination against women.

The newspaper industry environment that Higgins entered.

- The New York *Herald Tribune*

Higgins joined a newspaper that was owned by a single family, the Reids, and the way in which this family managed their company would have major consequences on Higgins’ career. The *Herald Tribune* had roots that extended back to founders of the ‘penny press,’ considered the beginning of independent journalism and mass

²³ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.24.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.25.

audience media.²⁵ Ogden Reid created the *Herald Tribune* in 1924 by combining two of the most important newspapers in American journalism. The first of these was the New York *Tribune*, founded by Horace Greeley in 1841. Greeley hired Ogden's father, Whitelaw, as chief editorial writer in the late 1860s. When Greeley died in 1872, Whitelaw Reid acquired controlling ownership of the *Tribune*.²⁶ When he died in 1912, he willed his entire estate to his wife, Elizabeth Reid, herself a wealthy woman. Her father had owned a Wall Street investment house, and left her a fortune estimated at \$25 million to \$30 million when he died in 1910. Mrs. Reid appointed her son Ogden to succeed her husband at the *Tribune*, and committed her own fortune to maintaining the business.²⁷ The second newspaper the Reid family acquired was the New York *Herald*, founded by Greeley's contemporary and archenemy, James Gordon Bennett, in 1835. Over the years the *Herald* passed into the hands of New York publisher Frank Munsey. When the newspaper became available for purchase in 1924, Ogden made the acquisition with his mother's money and created the *Herald Tribune*.²⁸

- Male culture at the New York *Herald Tribune*.

At any newspaper Higgins might have joined in the 1942, she would have entered a business dominated by men. In addition to the customary male environment, however, the New York *Herald Tribune*, had a unique culture built on masculine values. The paper's owner, president and publisher, Ogden Reid, was an

²⁵ Michael Buchholz, "The Penny Press, 1833-1861," in *The Media in America*, ed. William David Sloan, James G. Stovall, James D. Startt (Worthington, Ohio: Publishing Horizons, 1989), p.123.

²⁶ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, pp.122-35.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.139.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.214.

alcoholic. He delegated most, if not all management responsibilities for his business to three men. Wilbur Forrest, a former reporter, was chosen by Reid as his alter ego in management of the affairs of the newspaper. Forrest's position as president of the prestigious Gridiron Club, the all-male journalism society established in the 1880s in Washington, bestowed necessary status for him to have a close association with his wealthy boss. Forrest's athletic demeanor and his love of golf and hunting were attractive additions to Reid's weekends as a country gentleman pursuing outdoor activities on his Westchester County estate.²⁹ And Forrest's personal loyalty to Reid, caring for him during his daily rendezvous with alcohol, caused many of the staff at the newspaper to refer to him as the 'Seeing Eye.'³⁰

The *Herald Tribune's* role as chronicler and promoter of Republican political philosophy and candidates was extremely important to Reid. Responsibility for managing the political soul of the newspaper was delegated to Geoffrey Parsons as chief editorial writer. Parsons inhabited social circles in New York and Europe that made him a business and personal associate with whom Reid felt comfortable. Parsons served as an occasional drinking companion for Reid in one of New York's men-only society clubs, the Century. The details of day-to-day management of the newspaper's operations were delegated to Howard Davis, who was the general manager of the business.³¹

²⁹ Ibid., p.282.

³⁰ Richard W. Van Horne, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 15, Folder 328, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

³¹ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.283.

Because Reid's ability to run his business was impaired by alcohol, he was fortunate to have the talent to find exceptional men to whom he could delegate the responsibility of managing and producing his newspaper. In the early 1940s, in addition to his three senior executives, Forrest, Parsons and Davis, Reid's management team included managing editor George A. Cornish, foreign news editor Joseph Barnes, city editor Lessing Lanham Engelking, and night editor Everett Kallgren. Until Reid's death in 1947, these seven men (or their successors in several positions) handled the editorial and financial affairs of the New York *Herald Tribune* with almost total autonomy.

The cultural effect of Reid's alcoholism and the fact that men held all the management positions at the newspaper contributed to what *Herald Tribune* staffers described as its "fraternity" atmosphere.³² Prior to the 1940s, the newspaper employed few women other than in clerical positions. By the early 1940s there were a dozen women working on the editorial side of the newspaper, but most of these were separated from the main news operation because they were covering and writing news and features for the women's section. Within the building it was a man's world. Whitman remembered, "The first women copy editor in New York, a woman named Judith Rosen, was on the *Trib* during the war. She used to sit over to the far end of the horseshoe so she'd be out of the way when everyone else started saying 'f---.'" ³³

³² Danny Blum, "Letter to Richard Kluger," January 12, 1982, Box 3, Folder 35, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

³³ Alden Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 16, Folder 349, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

Earl Ubell, a science writer at the newspaper for twenty-three years, described the staff in the 1940s as a “lot of rah-rah boys and Texans and good ol’ Southerners.”³⁴

Many people who worked at the *Herald Tribune* felt they were part of a large family who loved the newspaper and the labor of publishing it.³⁵ As sometimes is the case in families, however, the *Herald Tribune* clan was dysfunctional. And, as can be the situation in real households, the problem was centered in the head of the family. Over the years Reid arrived at the office later and later in the day, sometimes not until the early afternoon.³⁶ Every day at around 4:00 P.M. he and Geoffrey Parsons would go down to a local bar for a drink.³⁷

The *Herald Tribune* staff frequented the Artist and Writers Restaurant, a few doors down from the newspaper’s office on West 40th Street. The restaurant went by a number of names. To the staff at the *Herald Tribune* it was known as “downstairs.” Many regulars called it Bleeck’s, which was pronounced “Blake’s,” after the name of the owner. Jack Bleeck was a local legend, having owned saloons in New York since before Prohibition. The front room of Bleeck’s was dominated by a forty-two foot long bar. The back room featured paneled booths and oak-top tables. Separating the rooms was a dilapidated, six foot suit of armor, said to have been donated by a regular who worked at the Metropolitan Opera where it had served as a stage prop.

³⁴ Earl Ubell, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 14, Folder 325, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

³⁵ Blum, "Letter to Richard Kluger."; Peter Kliss, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 7, Folder 149, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT; Stephen White, "Interview by Richard Kluger," September 28, 1981, Box 16, Folder 348, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

³⁶ Whitelaw Reid, "Letter to Richard Kluger," February 21, 1984, Box 10, Folder 234, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

³⁷ Judith Crist, "Interview by Richard Kluger," October 15, 1981, Box 4, Folder 60, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

Above the armor was a stuffed, striped bass wearing a sign that it had been caught by J.P. Morgan. If nothing else, Bleeck's was unusual. From lunch time until its closing at 3 A.M., some of the *Herald Tribune* staff usually could be found at Bleeck's.³⁸

For many years the most notable drunk at the bar was Reid. It was not unusual for him to start the evening at Bleeck's drinking scotch. His custom was to buy drinks for reporters and other patrons at the bar throughout the night, joining his guests in a glass of whatever they were having. Reid then sometimes went to another saloon after Bleeck's closed, and concluded the evening sleeping on the couch in his office. Bleeck's was an integral part of the male culture of the *Herald Tribune*. The descriptions of Reid's behavior at Bleeck's became part of the cultural fabric of the newspaper. Joseph Alsop, who, along with his brother Stewart, wrote a column for the *Herald Tribune* that was syndicated in over 100 newspapers, remembered that Reid was drunk half the time. "I once rescued him from drowning in his soup at Bleeck's by waking him up."³⁹ Peter Andrews recalled his father, reporter Bert Andrews, telling him that, "Ogden [Reid] once broke an arm coming out of Bleeck's and falling down while hailing a taxi."⁴⁰

Reporter Steven White said, "You were still at work when you were at Bleeck's – it was an extension of the office."⁴¹ Staff members showed up at

³⁸ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.264.

³⁹ Joseph Alsop, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 1, Folder 5, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁴⁰ Peter Andrews, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 1, Folder 9, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁴¹ White, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

lunchtime every day and took places along the bar. These early arrivals would be replaced in shifts as they day wore on and newspaper assignments were worked on or completed. Then, as described by reporter Kenneth Kayen, “you’d go there after work at eight or nine P.M. for a late dinner or a drink and wait till the first edition came up to check your story for typos.”⁴² Bleeck’s was an integral part of the process in place every day that produced a newspaper. Editor Everett Walker described Bleeck’s as “definitely a *Herald Tribune* annex.”⁴³

The fact that Bleeck’s was so important to the functioning of the newspaper was a problem for the women who worked at the *Herald Tribune*. Jack Bleeck “was just against women – at least he didn’t like to see them in his saloon,” said editor Alden Whitman. Whitman went on to say that Bleeck particularly “did not care for Marguerite Higgins” and “kept her at the bar,” not letting he go into the back room.⁴⁴

- Death of Ogden Reid

The newspaper was not profitable, and financial pressures were evident even before the start of World War II. At the time when most news organizations were building their foreign operations in anticipation of war in Europe, the *Herald Tribune* consolidated its overseas bureaus and eliminated correspondents because of its financial problems.⁴⁵ After the war ended, an even greater reduction in staff took

⁴² Kenneth Kayen, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 7, Folder 154, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁴³ Everett Walker, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 15, Folder 332, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁴⁴ Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

⁴⁵ Walter B. Kerr, "Letter to Richard Kluger," October 24, 1982, Box 7, Folder 148, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

place.⁴⁶ Two years later, the paper suffered what many on the staff believed to be its biggest loss of all, the death of Reid. Editor Alden Whitman said, “After WWII and death of Ogden Reid, [the *Herald*] *Tribune* lost its definition of itself.”⁴⁷ Inside the *Herald Tribune* building on West 40th Street, the staff knew that a monumental event had occurred that would affect them all. Rewrite man M.C. Blackman remembered, “In 1947 the esprit of the organization had crumbled.”⁴⁸ While the *Herald Tribune*’s owner had given his senior editors responsibility to run the newspaper, they now realized that he had played a far greater role than just owning and funding the operations. Foreign editor Joseph Barnes wrote that “the nature of the paper, its control, and its spirit changed in such important ways that it was perfectly clear that Reid played an enormously important role in this function of proprietorship.”⁴⁹

The executives and editors who were given such responsibility saw this as inspired management on the part of Reid. The editors saw him as “a tower of strength for the paper.”⁵⁰ John Donovan, Washington bureau chief, said that Reid was “an editor’s ideal because he let the talent run the show.”⁵¹ Everett Walker, who served as managing editor, said that Reid’s primary talent was his ability to pick good

⁴⁶ White, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

⁴⁷ Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

⁴⁸ M.C. Blackman, "Rewrite Man," Undated, Box 30, Folder 546, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁴⁹ Joseph F. Barnes, "Reminiscences of Joseph F. Barnes," 1954, Oral History Project. Columbia University., New York.

⁵⁰ Ralph Jules Frantz, "Roundtable of Letters from Former New York *Herald Tribune* Staff Members, Collected by John Price," Undated, Box 9, Folders 219-223, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁵¹ Robert J. Donovan, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 4, Folder 74, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

people to do their job. Reid hired most of this talent directly and let them do their own thing.⁵² While Reid did not give day-to-day direction, he did, however, have influence on the editorial content of the newspaper. Editorial staff writer Richard Tobin said, "Ogden was no slouch or fool about what a good newspaper is all about. He'd come up from Bleeck's, drunk or sober, and stop by the city desk to ask, 'What's new tonight, boys?'" He would look at the layout and make suggestions about shifting the play of a story. Tobin said Reid was "no dope," having "the wit to leave it (running the news side) to the professionals. . . ."⁵³

- The environment women faced in the newspaper business.

When Higgins was hired by the *Herald Tribune* in the early 1940s, opportunities had opened up for women because so many men had been drafted by the military to fight the war. While the war created jobs for women at newspapers, they faced an entrenched attitude by men who did not believe that women should work as reporters. This attitude can be seen in examples from earlier years. In the 1930s, women sometimes had to hide their gender in order to work in the news business. For example, journalist Ruth Cowan, a World War II correspondent like Higgins, used a number of male pseudonyms early in her career. Her first job was at the San Antonio *Evening News*. Other than the women working on the society section, she was the newspaper's only female reporter. She mostly wrote under the names Baldwin Cowan or R. Baldwin, and used her real, gender-disclosing name only for occasional articles for the woman's page.

⁵² Walker, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

⁵³ Richard L. Tobin, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 14, Folder 322, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

In an oral history interview, Cowan recalled that the men at the *Evening News* held ambivalent attitudes about her. They taught her how to write story leads and do interviews. While she was aware that most newspapers tried to protect women from murder trials and other messy stories, Cowan was given assignments like those given the men. She knew, however, that the male reporters felt she should not be given the same opportunities. Her strategy was to try to get along with, and even placate, her male colleagues. If she covered a story with a man, she'd give her work to him and not expect it to be the other way around. Her goal was to minimize attention to the fact that she was a woman. She knew the newspaper business gossip that a woman disrupted the staff because she intruded in men's business and threatened to introduce romance into the work place. Cowan got ahead by keeping to herself and focusing on her real objective, getting her work published. Her token act of rebellion was to try to get night assignments because she knew that the men didn't think she should have them.⁵⁴

In 1928 she got a job in Austin, Texas working in the two-person office of United Press, writing as R. Baldwin Cowan. Her male colleague didn't care that she was a woman, but that didn't shield her from the attitudes of the company's management. One day she answered the telephone at the office and a United Press executive asked to speak with Baldwin.

Cowan remembered she replied, "Well, at the present time, you're speaking to her."

The flustered executive said, "No, no, I want to talk to him."

⁵⁴ Ruth Cowan, "Women in Journalism," September 1987, Oral History Project, Women's National Press Club, Washington DC.

Cowan responded, “There ain’t no him here.”

He later said, “Look, United Press does not hire a woman,” and fired her even though she had proven behind a curtain of anonymity that she could do the job just as well as a man.⁵⁵ Out of a job, Cowan heard that the Associated Press was looking for a woman for their Chicago office. They hired her by telegram. When Cowan arrived in Chicago, she learned that she was the first woman to work there other than the switchboard operator. The men in the office didn’t know what to do with her. They couldn’t bring themselves to let her sit beside them at the main news desk, so they set up a little desk for her out of their way.

While Cowan survived being seated at her separate and unequal desk at the Associated Press’ Chicago office, she faced a tougher challenge overseas during World War II. She was ordered by the Associated Press to ship out to Algiers with a unit of the Women’s Army Corps. When she arrived in Africa, Wes Gallagher, who was in charge of the Associated Press unit there, greeted her saying, “I don’t want any women attached to my unit.”⁵⁶ He tried unsuccessfully to have her put back on the ship for its return trip the next day. Faced with her presence, Gallagher then refused to give her any assignments. Cowan said that she used to go to the military publicity officers each morning and ask them for suggestions about what to cover that day. This method generated lots of feature material and kept the home office happy with her work.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

In Higgins' early days in journalism, as this example shows, it was difficult for women to get jobs as a reporter. Finding a position as a foreign correspondent, Higgins' dream, was nearly impossible. Helen Kirkpatrick, one of Higgins' slightly older colleagues who covered World War II, wanted to work overseas as a journalist in the 1930s. When she spoke with Stanley Walker, city editor of the New York *Herald Tribune*, she was told, "I don't need women on the staff. I have one woman – Ishbel Ross. But if you have any ideas that you're going abroad, forget it. I'd never send a woman abroad."⁵⁸ She received an almost identical response from Chicago *Daily News* editor Paul Scott Mowrer when she applied for a position at his newspaper. "I like your stuff," he said, "but we don't have women on the foreign staff."⁵⁹ Refusing to give up, Kirkpatrick later had lunch with *Daily News* publisher, Colonel Frank Knox, who was under the mistaken impression that she had an offer to work for United Press. Kirkpatrick didn't correct his notion. Knox apparently like Kirkpatrick's work so much that, when he felt she was going to work elsewhere, he overcame his prejudices about women on the foreign staff and hired her.⁶⁰

Following the end of World War II, Higgins held onto her position as a foreign correspondent with the *Herald Tribune*. Many of the women who were hired as reporters during the war because the military had taken so many men into the armed services lost their jobs when the men returned to civilian life. For example, Julia Edwards was turned down for a job at *The Louisville Times* in the spring of 1945

⁵⁸ Helen Kirkpatrick Milbank, "Women in Journalism," April 1990, Oral History Project, Women's National Press Club, Washington DC.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

because that newspaper had forty-one men returning to their previous positions.⁶¹ Journalist Paul Duke, who is best known for the many years he hosted *Washington Week in Review* on PBS, remembered that he replaced a woman when was hired by the Associated Press in Richmond in 1948. She was the last of several women who had been hired during the war and then lost their jobs when the post-war newspaper business shifted back to its previous preference for male reporters. In Duke's experience at the Associated Press and then the *Wall Street Journal*, women reporters were non-existent or rare. It was not until he joined NBC News in 1964 that he found women correspondents were more frequently part of the news staff.⁶²

- What men thought a newspaperwoman should be

One of the exceptional men hired by Ogden Reid was Stanley Walker, who was promoted to *Herald Tribune's* city editor in 1928. Walker was one of the few reporters at the New York *Herald* who had been retained by Reid when he acquired the newspaper. Walker built the city room by hiring talented young men like Joseph Alsop and recruiting respected veterans like Pulitzer prize winner Alva Johnston from the *New York Times*, Edward Angly from Associated Press and Joe Driscoll from the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.⁶³

Walker's view of women journalists reflected attitudes of the times. He described them as lazy reporters, not looking up names and facts. He felt women

⁶¹ Mark Ethridge, "Letter to Julia Edwards," March 7, 1945, Box 3, Folder 1, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

⁶² Paul Duke, "Letter to the Author.," August 7, 2003, New York NY.

⁶³ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.242.

were “slovenly in their habits of mind and workmanship.”⁶⁴ They were not easy to work with because they sulked if they were criticized. Walker was so down on women journalists that he described their value only as the subjects of “good bar talk.”⁶⁵

Walker expressed these views fully in the forward to *Ladies of the Press*, the first history of women journalists written in 1936 by Ishbel Ross, reporter for the New York *Herald Tribune*. He believed that right-minded men had reason to be prejudiced against women because many of those who entered “newspaper work” were not good workers and behaved in an underhanded manner. Walker suggested that this behavior prevented other women without these flaws from having the opportunity to become “ornaments to journalism” – thereby managing to replace one prejudiced observation with another. He wrote:

“From the first, the woman who sought to make a place for herself in newspaper work has found editors prejudiced against her. Now, this prejudice is not so great as it was, but it still exists, and there are several reasons for it. Men are afraid of women, afraid and suspicious, for their dealings with this curious sex have taught them caution and suspicion. Another reason (there is no sense at this late day of putting on a bogus show of gallantry): A great many of the girls who have managed to get on newspaper payrolls have been slovenly, incompetent vixens, adepts at office politics, showoffs of the worst sort, and inclined to take advantage of their male colleagues. They have protested that they wanted to do a man’s work, to be treated as men, but soon or later some situation would arise in which all these high-minded declarations of purpose were revealed as so much nonsense. These inferior members of an often admirable sex have done a great disservice to their sensible, straight-forward sisters – women who would be ornaments to journalism if they had only a chance. By and large, it seems to me that the men in newspaper work have been uniformly friendly, sometimes extremely helpful to their women co-workers, even to the point of changing typewriter

⁶⁴ Stanley Walker, “Stanley Walker Research,” Box 12, Folder 268, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

ribbons for them – a simple task at which the female ingenuity appears invariably to bog down.⁶⁶

Walker begrudgingly acknowledged that Ishbel Ross was an exception to the rule. Walker wrote:

“It is true that, in general, women can be a good deal of a nuisance around a newspaper office, but this one was different. . . . her lack of giddiness, her clear and forthright mind, her amazing and unfailing stamina on the toughest assignments, and her calm judgment, seemed to come closer than any of the others to the man’s idea of what a newspaper woman should be.”⁶⁷

Walker basically said that Ross was an exception because she possessed masculine qualities – manly seriousness as opposed to schoolgirl giddiness; strength and stamina; and calmness under pressure in contrast to the stereotype of a woman’s emotional response. It is interesting that the only “mild flaws” that Walker found in Ross have tones of gender bias as well. She regarded “life as a fairly serious business, and never laughed enough” – not indulging in the heavy drinking, men’s club atmosphere that characterized journalism at the time; and she lacked venom – not tough enough like a man would be. She was too nice.⁶⁸

Years later, *Herald Tribune* rewrite man Richard West also complimented Ross by ascribing masculine traits to her. He described Ross in terms of a masculine stereotype – the strong, silent type. “She was in the newspaper crowd but not of it,” West wrote. “Everyone liked and respected her. In the city room she kept more or

⁶⁶ Stanley Walker, "Forward," in Ishbel Ross' *Ladies of the Press* (New York: Arno Press, 1974), p.xi.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.xii.

less to herself, not exactly aloof but guarded by a dignity, a reserve, and a sure sense of her own worth.”⁶⁹

In looking back at the *Herald Tribune*, Alden Whitman, copy editor at the newspaper from 1942 to 1951, described a woman reporter who was the opposite prototype to the Ishbel Ross profile of individuality. Whitman’s view for the reason why reporter Margaret Parton developed into a good reporter was that she was content to do “workaday assignments” during the early part of her career, in a “quiet,” yet “curious” manner. This description seems to be more of a man’s prescription that a woman knows her place in the newsroom.⁷⁰

- Helen Rogers Reid and the women of the *Herald Tribune*.

When Reid died in 1947, he willed the *Herald Tribune* and the rest of his estate to his wife, Helen Rogers Reid. Helen Reid, who had been working at the newspaper since 1918, took over management of the company with her eldest son Whitelaw, named after his grandfather.”⁷¹ Whitelaw possessed a genuine ‘nice guy’ character, but did not have the intellectual capabilities and leadership qualities of the editor of a great newspaper. He saw the *Herald Tribune* as his mother’s paper, and never became comfortable taking on an editor’s assertive role. To his mother, however, Whitelaw was destined to take his father’s place front and center because he was the son of the man who built the paper. In her view, his abilities would meet the

⁶⁹ Richard West, "Women on the Paper," Undated, Box 15, Folder 341, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁷⁰ Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

⁷¹ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.421.

challenge.⁷²

By 1954 the newspaper's financial losses were mounting at an increasing rate. Because the paper's financial condition continued to decline, Helen Rogers Reid gave business responsibility for her paper to her other son, Ogden Rogers Reid, while Whitelaw remained the newspaper's president and editor. Taking charge of business affairs in 1954, Ogden conducted a thorough financial review with the company's treasurer, A.V. Miller. "The money was running out . . .," they concluded. "It was very clear that something had to be done to save the paper . . ."⁷³ The newspaper needed several million dollars of new capital to rebuild its editorial and circulation operations. The Reids turned to family friend Jock Whitney. In the early 1950s Whitney was worth well over \$100 million, money he inherited from his father, who had business dealings in railroads, public utilities and New York City real estate.⁷⁴ The Reids proposed that Whitney make an investment in the newspaper while letting the family remain in control of their company. After reviewing the financial reports, Whitney turned them down.⁷⁵ Realizing that the *Herald Tribune* had to have new leadership if it was going to survive, Mrs. Reid directed that Ogden to replace Whitelaw as the company's president.⁷⁶

While circulation continued to decline, Ogden Reid made structural changes in the newspaper and dropped an edition, moves that enabled the business to earn a

⁷² Ibid., p.462.

⁷³ Ibid., p.492.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.524.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.495.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.496.

small profit in 1955. In 1956 profit nudged up slightly again.⁷⁷ In 1957, however, the situation dramatically reversed. Because of a union contract settlement, wages were up. Circulation was down. And the country was heading into a recession that would reduce advertising revenue. The company was again in desperate need of cash, and the only way to get it now was for the family to relinquish voting control to an outside investor.⁷⁸ The Reids turned again to Jock Whitney. This time he invested in the *Herald Tribune* with an option to buy controlling interest.⁷⁹ By 1962, Jock Whitney not only had control of the *Herald Tribune*, he had installed an entirely new management team.

Helen Rogers Reid was a former suffragist and avid feminist. She took a keen interest in women working for the newspaper as well as in the paper's coverage of women newsmakers and women's interests. Until her husband's death in 1947, Mrs. Reid was responsible for advertising sales and had influence on women working in editorial areas related to women. Helen Reid was a stylish woman with her conservative dress, minimalist use of classic jewelry, and signature small hats. She was a handsome woman, with strong cheekbones. And she was petite, less than five feet tall.⁸⁰ Totally focused on the success of the newspaper, she had command of the smallest detail and spoke forcefully about ideas she believed in.

Although she played an important role in bringing columnist Dorothy Thompson to the newspaper, in general the women she befriended worked in areas of

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.506-7.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.520-1.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.530.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.172.

female interest at the *Herald Tribune*. As has been mentioned, they included Emma Bugbee, Ishbel Ross, Irita Van Doren, Marie Mattingly, and Clementine Paddleford among others. Below are short profiles of these *Herald Tribune* women. These profiles are included to enhance the understanding of Higgins' relationship with the men at the *Herald Tribune* by describing the assignments and skills of other women who worked there. This provides a context for how those men would have viewed Higgins.

- Emma Bugbee joined the *Herald Tribune* in 1911 as the newspaper's first women reporter. Incredibly, Bugbee remained on the *Herald Tribune*'s staff for fifty-five years, until the last day it was published. Most of her reporting was of news of special interest to women, such as charity fund drives, social service work and interviews with prominent women in a weekly column titled *The Monday Woman*. After Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President, Bugbee became a close friend of Mrs. Roosevelt. Because of this relationship, Bugbee covered Eleanor Roosevelt when she came to New York and at political conventions.
- Ishbel Ross joined the *Herald Tribune* in 1919. Ross worked on the newspaper's city desk. An attractive woman, she "always looked as if she had just stepped out of a couturier's and a beauty shop."⁸¹ Ross was known for her coverage of trials, and in doing so competed with male reporters. In an interview, reporter Carl Levin remembered Ross as "a great writer." When she was on a story, Levin said, "nothing would stop her." He recalled a time when she came back to the office after covering a story in a rainstorm and sat

⁸¹ West, "Women on the Paper."

down at the typewriter dripping wet and wrote with puddles forming around her.⁸² Reporter Lee Stowe recalled that Ross had the talent to take on the “city’s top reporters on equal grounds . . . [she was] universally recognized as a star reporter.”⁸³ Richard West agreed. Ross “took on the men reporters of her time and often beat them. Not beat in the sense of spectacular scoops, but in covering and writing a story.”⁸⁴

- Irita Van Doren joined the *Herald Tribune* in 1926 to take over the Sunday book review supplement that the paper launched two years earlier. Van Doren was the wife of Columbia University professor Carl Van Doren, until they divorced in 1936. Her background and intelligence earned her a special relationship with Helen Rogers Reid, as she is said to have been the only woman that Reid confided in. In 1938 Van Doren met Wendell Wilkie and began an intimate relationship that was conducted rather openly in spite of the fact that Wilkie was married. Van Doren’s daughter remembered that her mother lived in “a sexually unconventional world” in Greenwich Village and knew plenty of couples or people who were not married but lived together.⁸⁵
- In 1926 Marie Mattingly (Missy) Meloney was hired by Helen Rogers Reid to work on the Sunday women’s section. She then became editor of the *Herald Tribune’s* Sunday magazine, which later became *This Week* and was

⁸² Carl Levin, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 7, Folder 163, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁸³ Lee Stowe, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 12, Folder 285, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁸⁴ West, "Women on the Paper."

⁸⁵ Barbara Van Doren Klaw, "Interview by Richard Kluger," July 11, 1982, Box 7, Folder 142, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

syndicated.⁸⁶ Mattingly also worked with Mrs. Reid on the development and launch of the *Herald Tribune* Annual Conference on Current Problems in 1930, an event that later became known as the *Herald Tribune* Forum. The Forum was a three-day conference on current affairs held in New York that featuring national leaders who spoke on the theme selected for each year.

- Clementine Paddleford was hired in the 1930s, due to Mrs. Reid's influence, to write food features. Helen Reid created the Home Institute, a model kitchen at the newspaper's offices in which Paddleford created and tested recipes.⁸⁷ The *Herald Tribune* carried more food news than any of its competitors, and was considered the official newspaper of women's clubs in the metropolitan New York area.⁸⁸

- Dorothy Thompson was brought to the newspaper in 1936 by Mrs. Reid, to write a column that would be "comment, exposition and opinion on public affairs, national and international," according to Whitelaw Reid.⁸⁹ Thompson began her newspaper career in Europe, reporting for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* syndicate. Though she covered revolutions and wars, her main interest and expertise were "the forces that make news rather than with the spot news development."⁹⁰ Thus, Thompson was more suited to writing a column than filing dispatches for a daily newspaper. When Thompson was at

⁸⁶ Reid, "Letter to Richard Kluger."

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.356.

⁸⁹ Reid, "Letter to Richard Kluger."

⁹⁰ Stein, *Under Fire: The Story of American War Correspondents*, p.217.

the height of her career, she reached eight million readers through her column that the *Herald Tribune* syndicated to 170 newspapers. In addition, Thompson drew another three million readers through a weekly column in the *Ladies Home Journal* magazine, and reached five million listeners through her commentary on radio. Thompson's agreement with the Reids was that she would not write opinion that was counter to the editorial policy of the newspaper. This agreement became unworkable with Thompson's support of Franklin Roosevelt, so she left the newspaper in April 1941.⁹¹

- Eugenia Sheppard was hired by Kay Vincent, the newspaper's fashion editor to work as her assistant in 1940. Vincent traveled to Europe by ship in 1948 to cover the Paris fashion shows. Following the shows she took an unscheduled and unapproved journey to London with a man she met onboard the ship. When she arrived back in New York several weeks later, Helen Reid fired her and appointed Sheppard as fashion editor. In 1950, managing editor George Cornish decided to combine cooking and fashion into one section. Sheppard was named "Women's Feature Editor," a title that Helen Reid created. After the Women's Feature section became established, Mrs. Reid suggested that Sheppard write a column. The column, *Inside Fashions*, ran three days a week and covered what was new in the fashion business, what the celebrities were wearing, and fashion events.⁹²

⁹¹ Dorothy Thompson, "Letter to Ogden and Helen Rogers Reid," January 8, 1941, Box 14, Folder 319, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁹² Eugenia Sheppard, "Interview by Richard Kluger," May 7, 1982, Box 12, Folder 282, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

- Margaret Parton was hired to work on the city desk in 1943. In 1947 she was assigned to be a foreign correspondent stationed in India. She returned to New York in the 1950s and was assigned to cover the Sam Sheppard murder trial in Cleveland. M.C. Blackman remembered that her coverage of the Sheppard trial was “literate, low-keyed reporting” and noted that she won New York Newspaper Women’s Club award for that assignment.⁹³ Reporter Judith Crist thought she was a good reporter and writer, but became “too caught up in her stories . . . [she was] too fragile and emotionally involved . . . you can’t be a poet in this business and survive.”⁹⁴ Parton left the newspaper in 1955 to join the staff of *Women’s Home Companion* magazine.
- Judith Klein Crist was hired to work on the Sunday women’s page in 1945, shortly after graduation from the Columbia Journalism School. She quickly was transferred to the news desk, where she worked as a reporter until 1960. Blackman remembered that during Crist’s first ten years at the newspaper “her byline appeared over an amazing variety of stories, ranging from political scandals and murder trials to weekly features for the Sunday school page. She took on the straight news part of the education beat, and did it so well that she won the George Polk award for a series on developments in education, and another from the Education Writers Association.”⁹⁵ She then

⁹³ Blackman, "Rewrite Man."

⁹⁴ Judith Crist, "Roundtable of Letters from Former New York *Herald Tribune* Staff Members, Collected by John Price," Undated, Box 9, Folders 219-223, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁹⁵ Blackman, "Rewrite Man."

was made arts editor and movie critic. Crist successfully made the transition to television where she reviewed movies on NBC's *Today Show*.

- India McIntosh worked at the newspaper from the mid 1940s until 1950. McIntosh started on the rewrite bank, and Blackman remembers that she was one of the few women who could “stand the pace and pressure” of that job. Blackman recalled: “India disdained any sort of sex distinction on the rewrite bank as elsewhere in the city room. ‘I’m a rewrite man,’ she said. ‘Who ever heard of a rewrite woman.?’” McIntosh worked as a reporter on the city desk in New York and in the *Herald Tribune*'s Washington bureau.⁹⁶
- Ann Pringle Eliasberg was hired by Eugenia Sheppard in 1948 to be a fashion writer and stayed with the newspaper until 1950. Eliasberg expanded her work beyond fashion and wrote about home design and furnishings. Her view (and Sheppard's) was that fashion is a part of life and included homes, foods, clothes and lifestyles of people. Eliasberg would profile an entire home in Sunday's *This Week* magazine. She wrote a syndicated column, *Inside Story*, about home furnishings.

Writing on the *Herald Tribune*

Writing style was very important to the *Herald Tribune*. In 1942, the year Higgins joined the newspaper, the *Herald Tribune* hired Lester Engelking to be city editor. Engelking wanted the *Herald Tribune* to be the best-written and best-edited newspaper in the country.⁹⁷ More specifically, Engelking insisted that the *Herald*

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Levin, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

Tribune “had better writers than the [*New York Times*].”⁹⁸ During the 1940s the *Herald Tribune* developed a “reputation for being the training school . . . for some of the brightest young writers in America.”⁹⁹ Not all of its reporters were great writers, however, so the secret to the superior writing style of the *Herald Tribune* often resided with the newspaper’s rewrite team. Copy editor Alden Whitman said, “The writers were encouraged to write with polish, of course, but it was the [rewrite] desk that often applied it.”¹⁰⁰ Reporter Francis Sugrue described the role of rewrite in the reporting process:

“ . . . a special breed of reporter . . . fit the *Herald Tribune* mold. Not just a fact gatherer . . . [a] fellow with sensibility, and a kind of acuity of vision that sought out the telling detail . . . The *Tribune* man had special obligations [and] . . . was synchronized with his rewriter and his editor.”¹⁰¹

Reporter Judith Crist described her first experience with the rewrite desk very early in her career at the *Herald Tribune*. “Joe Herzberg was on the [city] desk. I came over with my story. And he handed each page as he read it to [rewriter] Inky Blackman.”¹⁰² Crist was very upset that Herzberg didn’t like her copy, so much so that she refused to go home. She waited in the office until the early edition came off the press at eleven o’clock that night. Surprised at what she saw, Crist said:

“I read that story and I learned more about journalism than I had in the entire year I’d spent at Columbia [Journalism School] from the way Inky

⁹⁸ Leslie Midgley, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 8, Folder 191, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁹⁹ Barnes, "Reminiscences of Joseph F. Barnes."

¹⁰⁰ Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁰¹ Francis Sugrue, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 12, Folder 298, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁰² Judith Crist, "Interview by Author," August 7, 2003, New York NY.

Blackman had rewritten my story. He had exactly the right tone. There was a dual tone to it. He used all my facts, but the tone of it . . . that was the skill of the story. All I had written [was] a dry piece of reportage.”¹⁰³

Higgins’ early years at the *Herald Tribune*.

Higgins was hired as a cub reporter by Lester Engelking. Joseph Barnes, who rose through the *Herald Tribune*’s ranks from copy boy in 1934 to the position of foreign editor that he held when he left the paper in 1948, summarized the stages that many young people hired by the newspaper went through. First they worked as a general assignment reporter, covering stories during the afternoon hours for the next morning’s edition. The next level was “district work,” generally done at night covering crime. Reporters with good writing skills then might be assigned to the rewrite desk for a period, taking stories over the phone from their colleagues in the field. Finally, a reporter would progress to be a feature writer.¹⁰⁴

M.C. Blackman, who worked on the rewrite desk, remembered the first story he was given that had been written by Higgins. This occurred when Higgins was still a student at Columbia University.

“I was rewriting a short one about an event at Columbia University and the name of the campus correspondent on the upper left hand corner of the copy before me was Higgins. The story had an interesting angle and every necessary and seemingly accurate fact. It simply needed revision into acceptable newspaper prose, and that is one thing for which rewrite men are hired.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Barnes, "Reminiscences of Joseph F. Barnes."

¹⁰⁵ Blackman, "Rewrite Man."

Blackman remembered Higgins' reporting for its depth of information and fresh angles.¹⁰⁶ He described Higgins' ability as a writer in the context of her talent as a reporter:

“She never became an accomplished writer, despite her efforts, and her copy frequently had to go through the rewrite bank, but she always gave us something worth the effort of rewriting. . . .

“Smoothing her stories did not require a great deal of effort, because they seldom were of the type that lent themselves to what we thought of as the *Trib* treatment. They usually were straightaway stories . . . that she had obtained . . . where other reporters had failed, or an old story with a new slant that had been overlooked by her competitors. . . .

“The *Trib* was full of word merchants such as rewrite men... but a really good reporter is a rarity and something to be cherished. . . . Writers can be taught but reporters are born that way.”¹⁰⁷

Higgins developed a reputation for being an enterprising reporter but not a talented writer. Helen Rogers Reid once recalled that Higgins' later success was not unexpected based on the excellent work she produced in her early assignments by the newspaper.¹⁰⁸ Higgins was aggressive, followed leads relentlessly, asked tough questions, and always seemed to pull off the interview that other reporters thought was impossible. Her newspaper saw Higgins display this “drive and ingenuity” beginning almost with her first assignment.¹⁰⁹

While colleagues agreed that aggressiveness contributed to Higgins' ability to go out and get a story, they criticized her skill in reporting what she saw. *Herald Tribune* editor Whitman separated Higgins' reporting skills from her aggressiveness

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Helen Rogers Reid, "Remarks Introducing Marguerite Higgins at West Side Association Dinner," November 14, 1950, D 288, Helen Rogers Reid Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

¹⁰⁹ "Marguerite Higgins Dies at 45: Reporter Won '51 Pulitzer Prize." *New York Times*, p.27

when he said that she had “lots of brass but no real talent at writing.”¹¹⁰ The paper’s night city editor Charles Kiley concurred, saying Higgins “was a good digger and reporter, but she couldn’t write two straight sentences that didn’t need rewriting.”¹¹¹

In those early years at the newspaper, Higgins also developed a reputation for being a person not bound by traditional moral values and for being sexually adventurous. When Higgins joined the *Herald Tribune*, the man she would soon marry, Stanley Moore, was teaching at Harvard University and Radcliffe College.¹¹² Higgins dated a number of men who worked at the *Herald Tribune*, but Moore visited every other weekend from Boston. When Moore was drafted, he pressed Higgins to marry him. In November 1942 Higgins and Moore were married in Oakland, California and enjoyed a brief honeymoon in Carmel. Shortly after they were married, Moore set sail to Europe with the Army.¹¹³

After her husband left for the war, Higgins was seen with a number of different men in bars and restaurants around New York. During this period several male staff members at the *Herald Tribune* said they either had an affair with Higgins themselves or knew one of their colleagues who did. Reporter Robert Shaplen said he was her lover.¹¹⁴ Steven White and others said that Higgins had an affair with

¹¹⁰ Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹¹¹ Charles Kiley, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 7, Folder 142, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹¹² May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.37.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.56-59.

¹¹⁴ Robert Shaplen, "Interview by Richard Kluger," August 18, 1982, Box 12, Folder 281, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

rewrite man John Watson.¹¹⁵ Reporter Kenneth Bilby said that, following an evening of drinking, Higgins had a one-night fling with *Herald Tribune* executive Bill Robinson.¹¹⁶

Higgins' assignment to Europe.

In 1944, when it became apparent that the war in Europe was entering its last phase, Higgins and other reporters at the paper lobbied the editors to be sent overseas. Higgins appealed to Helen Reid, who intervened on her behalf. In August 1944, Higgins was sent to Paris. She was twenty-four years old, and threw herself into the situation in Europe with all the energy she had:

“In those first days on the job in Paris, I requested interviews of every major French official, developed sources on the British, American, and other embassies who could fill me in on respective national attitudes, and saw many top military officers, because inevitably war and politics were very mixed. I worked twenty hours a day, wrote two, sometimes three stories; filed 1500, 2000, sometimes 3000 words a night, usually with one dispatch headed for the front page.”¹¹⁷

Higgins was covering politics in Paris, but was determined to get to the front where the fighting was taking place. After weeks of pleading with Geoffrey Parsons, who ran the *Herald Tribune* operations in Paris, to send her with the Allied troops as they invaded Germany, she finally got her chance. But by the time she reached Frankfurt, only bombed out rubble remained. It was a devastating sight, but it was a cold story.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Crist, "Interview by Author."; White, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹¹⁶ Kenneth Bilby, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 2, Folder 31, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹¹⁷ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, pp.60-61.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.68-72.

With the war disappearing before her eyes, Higgins became even more determined. She hitched a ride on a transport that was ferrying gasoline to General Patton's tank corps and landed at the Weimar airstrip, where rumors were spreading concerning Nazi atrocities conducted on concentration camp prisoners. Higgins persuaded a military jeep driver to take her to Buchenwald. She reached the camp only a few hours after the Third Army liberated the prisoners. She was horrified by what she found. The emaciated prisoners, the corpses, the scenes of torture and murder were almost impossible to look at, much less understand.¹¹⁹ But Higgins covered what she saw like a veteran war correspondent, and sent stories back to New York that burned an image of horror and death onto the front page of the *Herald Tribune*. When the American troops forced the local German citizens to view the camp, Higgins's writing recorded the grim scene:

“At the crematorium, where some 200 prisoners were disposed of daily, several women fainted at the sight of half-burnt humans still in the ovens.”

“In the torture room the men and women of Weimar were shown the hooks from which the victims hung during their beatings and the bloody scratches on the walls made by men in agony.”¹²⁰

Higgins now was on the trail of a major story unfolding as the war was coming to an end. At Weimar she met Peter Furst, a reporter with the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper, and talked him into letting her ride in his jeep. Higgins and Furst arrived at Dachau just as American troops were fighting the remaining German defenders. They avoided the main battle and headed for the camp's administration

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp.74-75

¹²⁰ Marguerite Higgins, "Army Forces Weimar Citizens to View Buchenwald's Horror," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 18, 1943, 1.

buildings and compound. The German guards they met there knew the end had come and opened up the gates to the prisoners.¹²¹ In her story Higgins wrote:

“The Dachau camp, in which at least a thousand prisoners were killed last night before the SS (Elite Guard) men in charge fled, is a grimmer and larger edition of the similarly notorious Buchenwald camp near Weimar.”

“Tattered, emaciated men, weeping, yelling and shouting ‘Long live America!’ swept toward the gate in a mob. Those who could not walk limped or crawled.”¹²²

In Europe the *Herald Tribune* editors saw Higgins’ abilities. One reason for her success was that she was covering the most physically challenging of all news stories, war, at such a young age. While Higgins was only in her early twenties, the women journalists she joined in Europe were much older: Helen Kirkpatrick - thirty-five, Margaret Bourke-White – forty, Sonia Tomara - forty-seven, and Janet Flanner - fifty-two. Age was not the only advantage Higgins had over the other women correspondents. She had natural athletic skills. Higgins had a trim, athletic build - five feet, eight inches tall and weighed one hundred thirty pounds.¹²³ During high school she played basketball so well that one year she won the best athlete’s award.¹²⁴ With trust in her own athletic abilities she volunteered for a parachute jump onto the Rhine River approaches to Germany only seven weeks after her arrival in Europe. (Her editors refused to let her go.)¹²⁵ Six months later she demonstrated the youthful

¹²¹ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.92.

¹²² Marguerite Higgins, "33,000 Dachau Captives Freed by 7th Army." *New York Herald Tribune* May 1, 1943, 1.

¹²³ Marguerite Higgins, "Correspondent Credentials," 1950, Box 7, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹²⁴ Estes, "Memo to Tom Colman."

¹²⁵ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.68.

conviction of indestructibility by crossing eleven kilometers of German controlled territory to reach and help liberate the Dachau prisoner compound.¹²⁶

Higgins was aware of the importance of these youthful assets. She wrote, “First-rate war coverage, it seems to me, requires only two qualities that are not normally demanded of any first-rate reporter on a big story. They are the capacity for unusual physical endurance and the willingness to take unusual personal risk.”¹²⁷

With the requisite athletic ability, Higgins felt that a woman could be as successful as any man in covering a war, “At the actual war front a woman has equal competitive opportunities. Essentially it comes down to being in the combat area at the crucial time and having the stamina to do the jeeping and hiking necessary to get to where you can to file your story.”¹²⁸

While guts and athleticism helped Higgins make a name for herself early in her career, her colleagues at the *Herald Tribune* and other journalists saw additional qualities that contributed to her success. Walter Cronkite, who broadcast the evening news on CBS for many years, met Higgins in Europe at the end of World War II. “Her success was primarily the result of absolute hard work,” Cronkite said. “She dug and dug – she left no stone – or person [source] – unturned.”¹²⁹ Seymour Freidin, who worked as a foreign correspondent for the *Herald Tribune* beginning in World

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.89.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.208.

¹²⁸ Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.109.

¹²⁹ Walter Cronkite, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 4, Folder 61, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

War II, described Higgins as “a human vacuum cleaner ... she sucked up everything [for her reporting].”¹³⁰ Higgins wrote that her hard work was born of necessity.

“By the time I started filing stories, most of the other correspondents had been around the war and European politics a long time. They were not letting down but rather resting on their laurels. They had built their contacts and could rely on their network to keep them apprised of the main developments. There were so many obvious stories ... that the veterans were not doing much leg work in digging up angles and news on their own. Having no laurels to rest on, I became a cyclone of energy. I did the only thing I knew how to do. I became a city reporter turned loose in wartime on the central news area of a continent. I was a ruthless city editor with myself.”¹³¹

Berlin

Higgins remained in Europe at the end of World War II. During the winter of 1945 she was in Paris, covering non-military stories. In 1946 Higgins wrote about the elections in Poland and the war crimes trials in Nuremberg. In late 1946 through January 1947 she was in Prague reporting on the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia.

In 1947 Higgins was promoted to bureau chief in Berlin. Higgins wrote in her autobiography that her promotion resulted in part from being at the right place at the right time. John Elliot, who had been bureau chief for many years, left Berlin for a vacation in New York. Higgins was assigned to be his temporary replacement. In Elliot’s absence, Higgins was able to impress her New York editors with important stories, including an exclusive report on the plan by Vyacheslav Molotov to integrate the industrial sector of East Germany into the Soviet satellite system. While in New York, Elliot decided to ask his editors at the *Herald Tribune* for a leave of absence.

¹³⁰ Seymour Freidin, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 5, Folder 92, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹³¹ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.59.

Higgins believed that, “Geographic accident was undoubtedly one factor in making me the choice for the job.”¹³²

Foreign correspondents primarily sought positions in the Paris, Rome or London bureaus. Because of war damage and shortages of food and fuel, Berlin was considered to be a hardship post.¹³³ By the time Higgins was appointed bureau chief, the focus of power in Germany had shifted to Frankfurt where the American occupation forces were headquartered. Because of her experience covering the communists in Poland and Czechoslovakia, however, Higgins thought that Berlin, situated in the Soviet occupation zone, “was the critical point in the postwar world.”¹³⁴

While Higgins’ new title was bureau chief, she was a one-person bureau aided by a secretary. Staffing at the Associated Press, the other news agencies and the *New York Times*’ Berlin bureau consisted of a half-dozen or more reporters.¹³⁵ The fact that Higgins was a woman working against a greater number of competitive journalists caused the *New York Times* bureau chief, Drew Middleton, to predict that she wouldn’t last six months in her new job.¹³⁶ She lasted almost three years.

One year following her assignment to Berlin, a crisis developed that would hold the world’s attention and put Higgins’ stories on the front page for over a year. Berlin was an island of democracy isolated 140 miles inside Russian-controlled East

¹³² Ibid., p.158.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Harry N. Baehr, "Letter to Richard Kluger," October 18, 1981, Box 1, Folder 125, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹³⁵ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.166.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.161.

Germany. Getting supplies to the city had been difficult since the end of the war. There was only one rail line into Berlin. Trucks had to drive through East Germany on the autobahn to reach the city. Beginning in January 1948 the Russians began interrupting the flow of food and other supplies that were shipped by rail or truck.

The Western powers occupying Berlin, the United States, Britain and France, announced a currency reform that would take effect on June 20, 1948. To keep the old currency from entering their zone, where it was still valid, the Soviets banned all travel to and from the eastern zone. Several days later the Soviets suspended all ground travel in and out of Berlin. On June 25, 1948, Americans and the British responded by airlifting food to Berlin to feed the three million people in the Allied sectors. There was no coal to make electricity, so beginning in early July that was flown in as well. At the height of airlift activity in April 1949, an airplane landed every minute in Berlin with supplies. In May 1949 the Soviets lifted the travel ban. Because of the severe shortages in the city, however, the airlift of supplies continued until the end of September.

General Lucius Clay was the top United States official in occupied Germany. The senior Air Force officer on Clay's staff was General William Hall, who managed airlift operations. Hall was a graduate of West Point, where he had played football. Higgins fell in love with him, although Hall was married and had four children back in the U.S.

During the years that Higgins was in Berlin, new allegations arose that affected her reputation among her professional colleagues. The first of these, reported by May in *Witness to War*, her biography of Higgins, involved an incident in

which Higgins allegedly stole a story from another correspondent. May wrote that this account was told to her by Jim O'Donnell, who was a reporter for *Newsweek* in Berlin during the years that Higgins was bureau chief for the *Herald Tribune*. O'Donnell had written a story that involved a sermon the Catholic Cardinal in Berlin was going to make in which he would denounce the brutal behavior of the Russian occupation troops. Without O'Donnell's knowledge, Higgins saw the Cardinal's sermon while visiting O'Donnell's house, read it and filed a story of her own that was based on it. In this case the charge of stealing the story, however, was mitigated by the fact that O'Donnell also told May, "We had an understanding. Maggie worked for a daily paper, I for a weekly magazine. As such we weren't in direct competition ... Many times I'd give Maggie stories with the understanding that they wouldn't appear in the *Herald* until *Newsweek's* publication date."¹³⁷ In this incident Higgins never told O'Donnell that she had read the speech. After she filed her story, O'Donnell learned what she had done through other sources. O'Donnell later found out that the Cardinal had changed his mind about giving the sermon but O'Donnell chose not to tell Higgins to teach her a lesson. The story ran in the *Herald Tribune's* first edition before Higgins found out what had happened and had it pulled.

Other reporters accused Higgins of stealing stories as well. For example, reporter Carl Levin said, Higgins tried to "finagle stories from you . . . a man wouldn't have done that"¹³⁸ Don Cook, reporter in the *Herald Tribune* Paris bureau, said, "Maggie would literally steal the trousers off you for a story and had to be watched constantly. *Herald* writers were competitive but not with each other.

¹³⁷ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.119.

¹³⁸ Levin, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

Maggie was different; out there by herself.”¹³⁹ The fact that these allegations persisted even though specific incidents were not cited was demonstrated in the following 1979 interview of journalist Sonia Tomara by Keeshen.¹⁴⁰

Tomara: “... she [Higgins] was very ambitious.”

Question: “And that showed?”

Tomara: “Later on I heard a lot and I knew her in Berlin. She was ruthless with her colleagues, whereas most of us were friends ...”

Question: “How do you mean she was ruthless?”

Tomara: “She would take anybody’s story and run it as her own.”

Question: “Do you remember any of those stories that she took?”

Tomara: “No.”

Question: “Was it just that everyone knew that about her?”

Tomara: “Well, I don’t know about the others. I knew.”

Question: “And how did you know?”

Tomara: “Well, after all. One knows what other people do.”

Stories of Higgins’ sexual liberation continued after she arrived in Europe in 1944. Although Higgins’ marriage effectively ended when Moore left for the war, they remained legally married until 1948.¹⁴¹ *Herald Tribune* reporter Kenneth Bilby and Walter Cronkite of CBS News said that Higgins lived for a while with *Herald Tribune* correspondent Ned Russell after the war.¹⁴² Steven White, who was a correspondent for the *Herald Tribune* in Europe in the late 1940s, said that *New York Times* reporter Ed Morrow was her lover in Berlin.”¹⁴³ *Herald Tribune*

¹³⁹ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.189.

¹⁴⁰ Sonia Tomara Clark, "Interview by K. Keeshen," October 13, 1979, Box 6, Folder 122, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁴¹ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.52.

¹⁴² Bilby, "Interview by Richard Kluger."; Cronkite, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁴³ White, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

correspondent William Atwood, who was stationed in Europe after World War II, claimed that Higgins tried to seduce him one night in Berlin.¹⁴⁴

During these years in Europe, however, the sexual allegations turned onto the more serious charge Higgins used sex to obtain information from news sources. This belief was widely held by journalists at the *Herald Tribune* as well as by correspondents for other news organizations. *Herald Tribune* reporter Carl Levin said bluntly, "I always thought it was unfair that she advanced on her back."¹⁴⁵ Elizabeth Barnes, widow of *Herald Tribune* foreign editor Joseph Barnes, remembered that the men at the newspaper had "complaints about her sleeping with the generals" and "kicked the woman [Higgins] around [in terms of their male talk about her]."¹⁴⁶ Hal Boyle of the Associated Press, who worked along side Higgins in Berlin, made this allegation:

"In short order Maggie would be having dinner with the general, then flying away the next morning with the story the others hadn't been able to get. Naturally a lot of them [reporters] believed she offered more than lowered eyelashes to get the story. I have no idea whether that's true, but I'm sure she would have if it had been necessary to get what she wanted."¹⁴⁷

Harrison Salisbury of the *New York Times*, who knew Higgins years later when they both were reporting from Moscow, made the same charge. "Basically, she was an extraordinary ambitious reporter who would do anything for a story," he said.

¹⁴⁴ William Atwood, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 1, Folder 12, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁴⁵ Levin, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth Brown Barnes, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 2, Folder 17, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁴⁷ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.52.

“She’d sleep with anyone and use any tactic that suited her purpose.”¹⁴⁸ The allegations against Higgins often were repeated by men who were thousands of miles removed from the facts and possible truth of the charges. Richard W. VanHorne, whose years at the *Herald Tribune* were spent in New York, said that he “heard how she went to bed with a guy in Frankfurt to get a story from him.”¹⁴⁹

An additional allegation was made against Higgins at this time by *Herald Tribune* correspondent Steven White. White arrived in Europe in the spring of 1948. He was stationed in the Paris bureau under Homer Bigart to work as a roving correspondent. Early in November, White was sent to Berlin as a temporary replacement for Higgins, who had been injured on September 9th while reporting on an anti-communist protest at the Brandenburg Gate. Reporting as she always did from the “front,” Higgins suffered lacerations when she fell to the ground while in the middle of a large crowd running from shots fired by East German police. During the next six weeks Higgins continued to file reports from Berlin, even though she was developing severe skin infections due, in part, to the cuts she received. To have this condition treated and to get medical attention for other problems, Higgins checked into a hospital in Switzerland.

While at the hospital Higgins received a telephone call from a fellow Berlin journalist who said that White flaunted a copy of a letter he had sent to *Herald Tribune* editors suggesting that Higgins be transferred to Paris.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Harrison Salisbury, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 12, Folder 271, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁴⁹ Van Horne, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁵⁰ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, pp.184-85.

The following is from a letter that White wrote to Richard Kluger thirty years later to describe the allegations he made against her in Berlin:

“When you cover a narrowly defined beat, or when you work more or less alone in a closed society such as Berlin after the war, you are dependent on very few sources of information, and if you are to be effective you can’t spare any of them. When I arrived in Berlin, she had cut herself off from most of the American military establishment and all of the Berlin political establishment. That only made her more unscrupulous still. *It was necessary to be rid of her and we did* [italics mine].

More than that, reporters have to form a society of their own and behave as a society. . . . Maggie treated all reporters as enemies, even the one or two she slept with to my knowledge. They were competitors. And that too was bad for the [*Herald*] *Trib[une]*. I couldn’t cover Berlin alone! and neither could she. I needed Johnny [McDermott of United Press] and Wes [Gallagher of Associated Press] and Drew [Middleton of the *New York Times*], and a dozen others . . . and they needed me. Johnny and Wes had no choice but to compete fiercely with each other - - that is the nature of wire services. . . . But the rest of us had no such problems. . . . On occasion, of course, I would myself generate what felt like a good idea for a story, and work hard or not so hard to develop it, and if it continued to look good send it off: it would be an exclusive and it would aggravate Drew. But I was entitled to that, and it made him aggravated at himself, not at me. (It might very well make the [*New York*] *Times* aggravated, too, and at Drew, but he knew that he couldn’t complain.) He did the same to me once in a while. But if either of us ran into something good in the ordinary course of affairs, we automatically shared it. That was good for both of our papers.¹⁵¹

In a subsequent interview with Kluger, White again made the claim the he was responsible for Higgins’ ouster from Berlin. In his notes, Kluger wrote that White “asked Geoffrey Parsons, Jr., head of the [*Herald*] *Trib[une]* foreign correspondents in Europe to ‘get her out of here (Berlin first and Europe in general)’ and she was transferred to Tokyo . . .”¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Stephen White, "Letter to Richard Kluger," October 15, 1981, Box 16, Folder 348, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁵² White, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

Korea

Following two and one-half years in Berlin, Higgins was transferred to become bureau chief in Tokyo. At the time, Higgins did not like this assignment. In Europe her work had been page one material, frequently the headline story. She had worked hard to get her byline on the front page and that was where she wanted it to stay. There wasn't anything going on in Tokyo important enough to get her stories in the first section, much less on the front page. Her predecessor in Japan considered it a good week if one story was published at all, and that usually was buried deep inside the paper.¹⁵³

The New York *Herald Tribune* booked a room for Higgins at the Tokyo Correspondent's Club. By contrast, when she first arrived in Paris to cover the end of the war in 1944, she checked into the famed Scribe Hotel. In this fabled, romantic setting she began her career as a foreign correspondent. In Berlin she was given a beautiful home and provided domestic help. While reassignment to Tokyo wasn't a demotion, the accommodations at the press club made Higgins feel like she was busted in rank. The Press Club accommodations were not to be permanent, but it would take several months for the military to assign housing to her.¹⁵⁴

In April 1950, Higgins began work in the *Herald Tribune*'s office on the fifth floor of the Mainichi Building in the heart of downtown Tokyo.¹⁵⁵ In June the situation dramatically changed. At 4:00 A.M. on June 25, 1950 the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) attacked South Korea. Early that morning, General Douglas

¹⁵³ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.202.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.205.

¹⁵⁵ Beech, *Tokyo and Points East*, p.65.

MacArthur was contacted by telephone by the duty officer, “General, we have received a dispatch from Seoul, advising that the North Koreans have struck in great strength south across the 38th parallel.”¹⁵⁶ At 8:00 A.M. the American Ambassador in Seoul, John J. Muccio, cabled the State Department in Washington, “North Korean forces invaded the Republic of Korea at several places this morning. It constitutes an all out offensive against the Republic of Korea.”¹⁵⁷ At 9:30 AM Colonel Sterling Wright was attending a church service in Tokyo. An officer under his command walked down the aisle and tapped him on the shoulder as he was praying. “Colonel, you’d better get back to Korea right away.”¹⁵⁸

Chicago Daily News correspondent Keyes Beech shared a weekend beach house on the Japanese coast, at Kugenuma, with John Rich of NBC.¹⁵⁹ At 2:00 PM he received a telephone call from correspondent Larry Tighe in Tokyo. “You better get your duff up here fast,” Larry said. “The North Koreans have invaded South Korea. . . . There’s a war on, and there’s a plane leaving Haneda for Kimpo at three-thirty.” When Beech arrived at the airport, he was met by Peter Kalischer of UP, Frank Gibney from *Timemagazine*, photographers Chuck Gory and Charlie Rosencrans, and Higgins.¹⁶⁰

After one aborted flight from Haneda airfield, the correspondents managed to catch one of the last flights out of the U.S. Air Force base at Itazuke on a C54

¹⁵⁶ Hastings, *The Korean War*, p.63.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.53.

¹⁵⁸ T.R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1963), p.71.

¹⁵⁹ Beech, *Tokyo and Points East*, p.67.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.104-5.

transport on route to evacuate Americans from Seoul.¹⁶¹ Before they boarded the flight, Frank Gibney pulled Higgins aside and told her that she should stay in Tokyo because “Korea is no place for a woman.”¹⁶² This would not be the last time a man tried to keep Higgins from covering the fighting in Korea. Higgins’ response reflected her responsibility as a correspondent and the issue of gender. Higgins wrote:

“For me, getting to Korea was more than just a story. It was a personal crusade. I felt that my position as a correspondent was at stake. Here I represented one of the world’s most noted newspapers as its correspondent in that area. I could not let the fact that I was a woman jeopardize my newspaper’s coverage of the war. Failure to reach the front would undermine all my arguments that I was entitled to the same assignment breaks as any man. It would prove that a woman as a correspondent was a handicap to the New York *Herald Tribune*.”¹⁶³

At Kimpo airfield the reporters picked up an abandoned jeep and were directed to the headquarters of the U.S. military group in Seoul, the Korean Military Advisory Group (K MAG). On the way they could hear machine gun and small arms firing in the distance. At the K MAG headquarters they met Colonel Wright, who gave them a summary of the situation. The U.S. had less than one hundred men available and no one knew how close the North Korean troops were to Seoul. Colonel Wright wanted to be cautious during the night. He told the male reporters they could go with his aide and sleep on the floor of his quarters, and, for her comfort and safety, ordered Higgins to spend the night in the guest room at his quarters, which she did. At 2 AM the North Koreans attacked Seoul, and the reporters quickly were

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp.106-7.

¹⁶² Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.17.

¹⁶³ Ibid., pp.17-18.

back in their jeeps trying to escape across the Han River to the safety of Suwon to the south. Before they could make it to the bridge, the South Korean army crossed to safety and blew it up behind them, trapping Korean civilians and the Americans in Seoul.¹⁶⁴

By daybreak Colonel Wright was concerned that the Americans could not find a way across the river. If they let themselves get trapped in Seoul, they would be prisoners of the North Koreans. As the enemy drew closer, the KMAG troops approached the riverbank with rifles raised and commandeered rafts that had been taking civilian refugees and South Korean soldiers across the river. Higgins rode on the raft with the U.S. soldiers on the twenty-minute ride across the river. Men, women, children, and animals swam in the water around the raft. North Korean gunfire started raining down on the river when they were less than half way across.¹⁶⁵

On June 29th, Higgins' picture appeared on the front page of the *Herald Tribune* under the headline, "Seoul's Fall: By a Reporter Who Escaped."

"Sixty United States Army officers and four newspaper correspondents escaped this morning by make-shift ferry across the Han River southward from Seoul after the South Korean Defense Ministry suddenly blew up all the bridges, trapping the Americans for hours in the isolated capital."¹⁶⁶

When they reached Suwon, Higgins saw the *Bataan*, a large four-engine Lockheed Constellation that belonged to General Douglas MacArthur, parked at the airstrip. She propped herself up against a building beside the runway and started to type the story on her portable. Suddenly she was joined by General MacArthur, who

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pp.18-25.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.26-28.

¹⁶⁶ Higgins, "Seoul's Fall: By a Reporter Who Escaped." *New York Herald Tribune*, p.1

had walked over to say hello. He was wearing his famous gold-braided hat, dark glasses, old khakis, and a shirt open at the collar. She quickly put her typewriter aside and stood to greet him. Higgins had met MacArthur before. Shortly after she arrived in Tokyo, she had arranged a meeting with the General at his office.

Following the formal surrender of the Japanese on the battleship Missouri in 1945, MacArthur had become the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, not only overseeing the occupying army but taking over as the de-facto ruler of Japan. MacArthur had graduated from West Point in 1903 and attained the rank of Brigadier General in World War I. Because MacArthur had been a principal actor on the world stage for so long, he seemed timeless. On the other hand, the General obviously was sensitive about his age. A sign hanging on the wall above his desk read, 'Youth is not a time of life. It is a state of mind.'

MacArthur gave Higgins an opportunity to file her story of the escape from Seoul by offering to fly her back to Tokyo. Already on board were the four news bureau chiefs, Russ Brines of the Associated Press, Earnest Hoberecht of United Press, Howard Handleman of International News Service, and Roy McCartney of Reuters. MacArthur limited his news access to these four men. This created a lot of ill will among other reporters, who referred to the news bureau chiefs as 'The Palace Guard.'¹⁶⁷

Once underway, Higgins was invited to interview MacArthur in his private cabin on the airplane. Afterward she wrote MacArthur, "Because of your early

¹⁶⁷ Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.31.

conversations with me, the paper gained, I believe, quite a new slant on Far Eastern affairs.”¹⁶⁸

Higgins faced a new, unique challenge almost immediately following the invasion of South Korea with the arrival of the *Herald Tribune*'s Pulitzer Prize winning war correspondent, Homer Bigart. In 1950 Bigart had worked for the *Herald Tribune* for over twenty years, his entire career. He joined the newspaper as a copyboy in 1927, working at nights while he attended New York University's School of Journalism. Because of economic conditions, he dropped out of school and went to work full-time for the *Herald Tribune* in 1929. He moved up through the ranks, first working as a local reporter and then being promoted to handle metropolitan news assignments. When World War II began the *Herald Tribune* sent him to Europe where he built his reputation as a foreign correspondent. Bigart won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting in World War II, and was given many other journalism awards.¹⁶⁹ When Bigart arrived in Korea in 1950 he was a forty-three year old bachelor, tall and slightly overweight. His appearance at that time was crusty and rough, with a stubble beard and a dangling cigarette. He was not overly neat either, dressed in khaki fatigues with his shirt was hanging out of his ripped, stained trousers.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to General Douglas MacArthur," Undated, Box 2, Correspondence M, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁶⁹ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, pp.363-4; Richard Severo, "Homer Bigart, Acclaimed Reporter, Dies," *New York Times*, April 17, 1991, A20.

¹⁷⁰ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*. See photo.

Bigart arrived in Korea and filed his first front-page story of the war.¹⁷¹ He told Higgins that he was taking over and that she was to return to Tokyo; adding that if she did not do as he said, she would be fired.¹⁷² When Higgins refused to obey his order, Bigart threatened journalists who were her friends. He told *Life* magazine's Carl Mydans that if he assisted Higgins by taking her to the front he would be responsible for the loss of her job.¹⁷³ Higgins believed that the war was a bigger story than one person could cover and very much wanted to report on the action. Higgins sent a cable to her editors in New York explaining what had happened and saying that she wanted to stay.¹⁷⁴

Higgins received no response from New York. She continued to cover the fighting, although the incident and the lack of direction from her editors upset her greatly. On July 1, 1950 she wrote in her diary, "going forward in spite of Homer [Bigart] – heartsick."¹⁷⁵ Over two weeks later she still had not heard from New York, and was uncertain as to whether or not the *Herald Tribune* was going to fire her.¹⁷⁶

Higgins did all that she could to cover the fighting and file her dispatches to New York. The day following her flight on MacArthur's *Bataan*, Higgins flew back to Korea on an unarmed, four-engine C-54 cargo transport loaded with crates of 155-

¹⁷¹ Homer Bigart, "U.S. Warships Sink Korean Navy Vessels," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 3, 1950, 1.

¹⁷² Higgins, *War in Korea*, pp.56-57.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.58.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.56-57.

¹⁷⁵ Marguerite Higgins, "Diary Entry," July 1, 1950, Box 8, Diary, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁷⁶ Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.102.

millimeter ammunition. In the early hours of the invasion President Truman made the decision to send all available ammunition and equipment in Japan to the South Korean forces. After that a steady stream of C-54 traffic shuttled to Suwon ferrying supplies. North Korean Yak fighters turned these trips into risky adventures, attacking the Suwon airstrip and the incoming planes. Just the day before her return, a C-54 had been shot down during its landing approach. As Higgins settled in the jump seat in the cockpit, the pilot handed her a helmet and a parachute. Describing the situation in Suwon after the plane landed, Higgins wrote:

“As I climbed out of the plane . . . I was greeted by a dour army colonel. ‘You’ll have to go back, young lady,’ the colonel said. ‘You can’t stay here. There may be trouble.’ Somewhat wearily, I brought out my stock answer to this solicitude. ‘I wouldn’t be here if there were no trouble. Trouble is news, and the gathering of news is my job.’”¹⁷⁷

The colonel at the Suwon airport was not the only one who wanted Higgins to leave the country. On July 17th, General Walton Walker expelled Higgins from Korea. “I received orders to get out of the Korean theater of war immediately,” Higgins wrote, “I was being thrown out because I was female and because ‘there are no facilities for ladies at the front.’”¹⁷⁸ Higgins did not intend to go without contesting the order, so she went to Walker’s Eighth Army Headquarters at Taegu and asked to see him. She was intercepted by the Public Information Officer. Higgins described what happened next. “I’m taking you to the airstrip, and right now,” Higgins quoted the officer as saying, “even if I have to call some military police. And you can write that down in your little notebook . . . I know all about you.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.38-39.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.95-97.

You're just trying to make some unpleasant publicity for the General."¹⁷⁹ Higgins added, "On the way to the field he further clarified his views on women correspondents."¹⁸⁰

Both Higgins and the executives at the *Herald Tribune* petitioned General MacArthur to reverse Walton's order of expulsion. On July 19th the *Herald Tribune* announced on page one, "Return of Marguerite Higgins To Front Allowed By MacArthur." The article included the text of the telegram that the newspaper had received from General MacArthur, "Ban on women in Korea being lifted. Marguerite Higgins held in highest professional esteem by everyone. General Douglas MacArthur."¹⁸¹

Once she was back in Korea, Higgins traveled to the front to cover the fighting. On August 2nd, Higgins decided to visit the 27th Infantry, known as the Wolfhound Regiment.¹⁸² The nickname was earned by this Army unit in World War I when their pursuit of the Bolsheviks in the fight to control the Trans Siberian Railroad was compared to the relentless chase that a Russian Wolfhound dog gives a fleeing wolf. They were a highly regarded fighting unit. The Wolfhounds were deployed near Chindongni on the western side of Masan Bay, less than thirty miles west of Pusan. A North Korean division had come due south from Taejon and now

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.107.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p.107.

¹⁸¹ "Return of Marguerite Higgins to Front Allowed by MacArthur," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 19, 1950, 1.

¹⁸² Higgins, *War in Korea*, pp.116-32.

was poised to overrun Masan and trap U.S. and South Korean forces. The enemy advance had to be stopped at all costs.

The regiment was commanded by Colonel John Michaelis, a thirty-seven year old West Point graduate. Michaelis had commanded the 502nd Airborne Regiment in World War II, and “was a twice-wounded veteran of D day and Arnhem.”¹⁸³ His nickname was “Iron Mike.”

The regiment headquarters had been set up in a schoolhouse, a small, frail wooden building, protected under the brow of a high hill. It was close to three in the morning and the fighting had been going on all night. Higgins knew that she had to get some sleep. She found a long wooden grill that would serve as a bed for what was left of the night. Others propped themselves up against a wall or stretched out on the floor for a short rest while the headquarters staff continued to work.

At dawn a fire was lit and water set to boil. Within a few minutes Higgins and a half dozen regimental staff officers sat at a table for breakfast. Suddenly there was a burst of machine gun fire. Bullets slammed into the coffeepot sitting in the center of their table, knocking it off and into a wall. Higgins pushed back from the table and dove beneath it.

During the night the enemy had broken through the defense lines and surrounded the schoolhouse. Higgins and the officers leaped through the window to a stonewall that protected them from the gunfire coming from above. The courtyard quickly was filled with men trying to organize a defensive position while others were returning fire.

¹⁸³ Hastings, *The Korean War*, p.95.

By 7:45 A.M. the battle continued in full fury. Higgins managed to move across the courtyard to the temporary command station. From there she could see the medic station set up at the end of the schoolhouse where the doctors and first-aid men were working on the wounded. Shortly after Michaelis' troops established their position, soldiers started bringing wounded from the hills to the aid station, carrying them on their backs. Not only were the medics falling behind, leaving wounded lying on the ground waiting to be tended, they were being fired upon as they worked. The doctors and the wounded were staying low to avoid being hit.

The medics were running short of bandages and plasma, but they couldn't leave their patients to get more supplies. Higgins put away her notebook and crawled over to the aid station. As the fighting raged on the hill above, Higgins moved from doctor to patient and from first-aid man to wounded, helping with bandages and administering plasma.

On August 4th the headline on a page one story in the *Herald Tribune* was "Reds Shoot Americans Coffee Off Table in Breakfast Attack." In her story, Higgins described the fighting that had taken place. Toward the end she added, "One correspondent learned how to administer blood plasma."¹⁸⁴

Not long after the battle of Chindongni, friends and family of John Michaelis sent him copies of articles that had been written, including the one that Higgins wrote for the *Herald Tribune*. Michaelis knew the contribution she made that day and he intended to let the *Herald Tribune* hear about it. He wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper in which he called Higgins' article about the battle "the height of

¹⁸⁴ Marguerite Higgins, "Reds Shoot Americans' Coffee Off Table in Breakfast Attack," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 4, 1950, 1.

understatement insofar as the personal activities of Miss Higgins were concerned. . . . Miss Higgins completely disregarded her own personal safety, voluntarily assisted by administering blood plasma to many wounded . . .” The paper ran Michaelis’ letter on September 14th in a special box on page four under the title, “Tribute to Marguerite Higgins.”¹⁸⁵

Later that month, Higgins suffered an injury that almost prevented her from continuing to cover the war. On August 26th, Higgins and Keyes Beech of the *Chicago Daily News* were leaving a dinner at the residence of John J. Muccio, American Ambassador to the Korean Republic. The Ambassador’s residence was located on a high, steep hill that overlooked the city of Pusan. Driving up earlier in the evening they saw that the road was cut into the side of the hill, creating a sheer, high cliff on one side that fell off fifty feet to the ground below. Driving down after dark was dangerous.

Beech was driving and, as they started down the hill from the Ambassador’s house, the brakes on the jeep failed. Beech had to choose between going over the embankment or stopping the jeep by crashing into a concrete gatepost. He yelled a warning to Higgins as he steered into the gatepost. The jeep was moving fast enough to cause a crash so loud it could be heard up the hill by the Ambassador.

The force of the collision propelled Higgins face first into the windshield. When Beech looked over, she was bleeding from her nose and mouth. A military ambulance arrived and, over Higgins’ objections, took her to the hospital. Beech was reasonably sure she had suffered a concussion. The next morning he visited Higgins and found her in a rage. “These bastards have taken my clothes and won’t give them

¹⁸⁵ J.H. Michaelis, "Tribute to Marguerite Higgins," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 14, 1950, 4.

back to me,” she said bitterly. “They want to keep me here for days. . . She asked [Beech] to go and get her bag, in which she had more clothes, and promised to sneak out of the hospital . . .”¹⁸⁶ Within a few hours they were headed back to the front.

By September 1950, General Walker’s Eighth Army had retreated to Pusan, the southern tip of the Korean peninsula, where the North Koreans threatened to force an American defeat or evacuation. General MacArthur devised a strategy to land his forces at Inchon behind the North Koreans. This would enable the Americans to cut the enemy’s supply lines and allow Walker’s forces to break out of Pusan with a counter offensive.

The Navy opposed the amphibious landing because of the unfavorable conditions at Inchon, and made a presentation to MacArthur showing the sea walls and buildings surrounding the landing area, and pointing out all the locations of potential strong enemy resistance to the forces on the ground. At the end of the long meeting, Rear Admiral James Doyle summed up the Navy’s position, “The best I can say is that Inchon is not impossible.”¹⁸⁷

MacArthur was not deterred.

“Gentlemen your viewpoints have been magnificent and I respect them highly. However, I am the responsible commander and will take the responsibility. *Inchon* it will be. . . . It is plainly apparent that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest. The test is not in Berlin, or Vienna, Paris, or Washington. It is here and now. It is in South Korea. . . I can almost hear the ticking of the second hand of destiny. We must act now or we will die . . . We shall land at Inchon, and I shall crush them.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Beech, *Tokyo and Points East*, pp.179-80.

¹⁸⁷ Hastings, *The Korean War*, p.101.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid; David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), pp.82-83.

Among the Tokyo press corps, the Inchon was such a poorly kept secret it was known as ‘Operation Common Knowledge.’¹⁸⁹

Higgins checked in with the officer in charge of press logistics, Captain Roger Duffy, for assignment to a ship so she could cover the landing with the other journalists. Duffy informed Higgins that she was assigned to the hospital ship, *Consolation*, sailing from Pusan on the September 11th. Higgins complained that she couldn’t cover the invasion from a hospital ship. Higgins wrote,

“I gave Captain Duffy all my usual arguments: that women war correspondents were here to stay and the Navy might as well get used to them; that there were far more ‘facilities’ on a ship than in the foxholes I’d been occupying; [and] that it was not fair to deprive the New York *Herald Tribune* of coverage because I was a female.”¹⁹⁰

Higgins’ argument had no effect, and she was told to return to pick up her orders assigning her to the *Consolation*. When she opened the envelope containing her orders, she found that the Navy had made an administrative error. Her orders said that Marguerite Higgins could board “any Navy ship” in the pursuit of press duties.¹⁹¹

The only problem with Higgins’s reprieve was that she was on a list to board the *Consolation*. To get a place on another ship she’d have to talk her way aboard. Higgins had heard that the assault transports were leaving Pusan the next day. She had to race back to Korea and start talking. When Higgins arrived in Pusan, her luck continued. Higgins located the command ship of a transport group, called the *Henrico*, that not only would take her, it had an unassigned cabin that she could use.

¹⁸⁹ Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.136.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp.136-37.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p.137.

The *Henrico* was transporting the 5th Regiment of the 1st Marine Division, led by Colonel Ray Murray. The Colonel and most of the men were veterans of some of the fiercest fighting in World War II. Higgins was going ashore at Inchon with seasoned battle veterans. Also on board were John Davies, photographer with the Newark *Daily News*, and Lionel Crane, a reporter with the London *Daily Express*.¹⁹²

After several days of air bombing and shelling from cruisers and destroyers, the amphibious landing would take place. Higgins would be going ashore with Marines on a landing craft that was about twice the size of a large lifeboat. The boats would be lowered over the side of the *Henrico* and then she would have to climb down rope cargo nets to get in. When they reached the beach, there would be a twelve-foot seawall. The seawall “scared me to death,” recalled Marine Lieutenant Colonel Harold Roise. “We were not landing on a beach; we were landing against a seawall. Each LCVP [landing craft] had two ladders which would be used to climb up and over the wall. This was risky especially if the enemy had any forces nearby.”¹⁹³

The *Henrico*'s orders were to begin lowering the landing craft at three o'clock. Higgins described her climb down the cargo net draped over the side of the *Henrico* to the landing craft waiting in the water below. “The trick was to hang onto the big knots with all your strength,” she wrote, “while you groped with your feet for the swaying rungs below.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Ibid., p.141.

¹⁹³ Knox, *The Korean War. Pusan to Chosin: An Oral History*, p.214.

¹⁹⁴ Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.142.

Higgins' landing at Inchon was a dangerous feat that took considerable courage. As their LCVP approached the shore, Higgins and the Marines began to hear the sound of machine gun fire. Tracer bullets whistled over their heads. Enemy fire increased as they got closer to shore. Small arms fire now could be heard along with the machine guns. Higgins and the Marines hunched low in the boat.¹⁹⁵

When Higgins' LCVP reached the beach, the boat's ramp was wedged against the seawall. In spite of the gunfire, the Marines were climbing out of the bow of the boat. When Higgins's turn came, she balanced her typewriter on the hull directly where she would slide out of the boat. She dropped over the side and into three feet of water.¹⁹⁶

As soon as Higgins hit the ground, a grenade landed just beyond her on the beach. Several of the Marines were crawling near where it landed. Other Marines around her started to crawl on their stomachs toward boulders at the bottom of the seawall. As they lay there, three more boats landed. In very few minutes more than sixty of them were lying prone, between the sea wall and the water. Suddenly a huge wave rose up from the surf and began to crash down on them. Looking up they saw an LST headed directly on top of them with its bow doors open and ramp lowered halfway. They were about to be crushed by this enormous ship.¹⁹⁷ At once the whole group rose up and began vaulting the wall.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p.144.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.145.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.145-46.

Once ashore, Higgins covered the troops as they fought their way toward Seoul. Marine Lieutenant John Counselman remembered an encounter with her.

“Then I took a ricochet. A round skipped off the side of the tank and hit my leg. It hardly drew blood, but my leg immediately turned blue black. A corpsman had my pants down around my ankles. I looked around and, oh, God!, there was Maggie Higgins. Every time you looked around, there she was!”¹⁹⁹

Higgins spent a lot of time in Korea with correspondent Keyes Beech. Beech was the Far East correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News* for thirty years. As a war correspondent, he won the Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of Korea in 1951, a Pulitzer also shared by Higgins and four other correspondents.²⁰⁰ Higgins wrote, “Keyes and I were the envy of the group because of our jeep, the one he had rescued from Seoul. For many months we had the only available vehicle. The rest of the press usually hitchhiked.”²⁰¹ Transportation meant being able to file stories more quickly. In one incident, Beech even told a correspondent for a competing news organization, to whom he had given a ride, to get out because he wanted to make sure he would file before his competitor could.²⁰² During this time Higgins and Beech were lovers. Beech acknowledged that Higgins “was gracious enough to share her Air Force sleeping bag with me from time to time”²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Knox, *The Korean War. Pusan to Chosin: An Oral History*, p.279.

²⁰⁰ "Keyes Beech, 76, Correspondent in Asia for Five Decades Is Dead." *New York Times* February 16, 1990, D19.

²⁰¹ Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.97.

²⁰² Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.183.

²⁰³ Keyes Beech, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 2, Folder 24, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

CHAPTER 5. MARGUERITE HIGGINS: CELEBRITY JOURNALIST

Fame

As discussed above in the literature review, national news magazines began to write about Higgins' work as a war correspondent shortly after the beginning of the Korean War. The media exposure was making Higgins a famous person. Prior to 1950, ". . . fame was still the preserve of political and military figures, and leading players in the arts . . ." ¹ Just as movie actors became movie stars when their off-screen lifestyles and personalities surpassed the importance of their acting, ² Higgins became famous not because of her reporting from Korea, but because she was a war correspondent who was a woman.

Higgins was an early example of the development of the celebrity journalist. In a paper that touched on fame that is acquired by journalists, Dennis Russell discussed how some journalists obtain larger-than-life personas. He wrote that this was not accomplished not by their actual work as journalists. Celebrity for a journalist is achieved by what they write about themselves, or by what others write about them that focuses on their escapades as they pursue some story, or anecdotes about their work, such as how their honed skills as a reporter enable them to see through the facts to discover an underlying story. ³ While Edward R. Morrow is

¹ David Giles, *Illusions of Immortality: A Psychology of Fame and Celebrity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p.23.

² *Ibid.*, p.21.

³ Dennis Russell, "The Journalistic Autobiography: How Reporters View Themselves and Order Their Experience." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, San Antonio TX August 4, 1987.

arguably the most famous American journalist (and certainly was more famous than Higgins in 1950), he derived his historical celebrity in large part from his appearances in the *See It Now* and *Person to Person* television series. Rather than being seen as only a hard news journalist, by the end of his career Morrow's fame grew in part from his work on television documentaries and celebrity interviews.⁴

The incident that transformed Higgins from being a well-known woman journalist to a famous person was the October 2, 1950 *Life* magazine feature, "Girl War Correspondent," written and photographed by Carl Mydans.⁵ Since the late 1930s *Life* magazine had referred to itself as "America's Most Important Editorial Force."⁶ By 1950 the magazine had become even more powerful in its ability to create awareness in the United States of the people and other subjects it wrote about and the products of advertisers who bought pages to reach its vast audience. In the year that Higgins was featured on the pages of *Life*, over half the U.S. population saw one or more issues of the magazine in any three-month period. *Life*'s total circulation was 62,600,000, representing over forty percent of the total population at the time.⁷ The feature on Higgins got the attention of agents and executives in the motion picture industry. Shortly after publication of the October 2nd *Life* issue, Higgins received a cable in Korea from George Bye. [This most certainly was George T. Buy, a prominent literary agent at the time, who perhaps represented Higgins on her

⁴ Jeff Merron, "Murrow on TV: "See It Now," "Person to Person," and the Making of a 'Masscult Personality'," in *Journalism Monographs* (Columbia SC: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, July 1, 1988).

⁵ Mydans, "Girl War Correspondent." *Life*, pp.51-60.

⁶ Vicki Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1986), p.229.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.341.

upcoming book.^{8]} The cable Higgins received from Bye said “one inquirer an agent for star who wants to be you in picture ... Metro and Warner warmly interested . . .”⁹ While Bye doesn’t identify the star, Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM) and Warner Brothers were top ranked motion picture studios of the period.

Higgins also received a cable from Douglas Whitney at Music Corporation of America (MCA), “Interested in securing rights to your life story for films.”¹⁰ At the time, MCA, which was founded in Chicago by Hollywood legend Lew Wasserman in the early 1930s, was a major player in the entertainment business. MCA had become established as a talent agency in Los Angeles in the late 1930s and had major figures in the entertainment business, like Frank Sinatra, under contract in the 1940s. When Wasserman contacted Higgins, he was in charge of the careers of movie stars like Jimmy Stewart.¹¹ A few days later Higgins received cables from Wasserman himself and prominent movie producer William Perlberg. In separate cables, Wasserman and Perlberg proposed that MCA represent Higgins in Hollywood.¹² Perlberg had been producing major motion pictures since the mid-1930s, had received an Academy Award nomination and was then at Paramount. (While he never produced the story of Higgins in Korea, in 1954 Perlberg did make one of the best known of the Korean

⁸ Marguerite Higgins, "Cable Correspondence with George Bye," 1950, Box 2, Correspondence H, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Douglas Whitney, "Cable to Marguerite Higgins," September 30, 1950, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹¹ Connie Bruck, *When Hollywood Had a King* (New York: Random House, 2003).

¹² Bill Perlberg, "Cable to Marguerite Higgins," October 6, 1950, Box 2, Correspondence P, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; Lew Wasserman, "Cable to Marguerite Higgins," October 3, 1950, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

War movies, *The Bridges At Toko-Ri*.) These cables were followed up in two days by another message from Wasserman saying that Paramount, MGM and Warner Brothers *insisted* on bidding on the rights to her story. That same day Higgins received another cable from Perlberg proposing that she visit Paramount when she returned to the U.S.¹³

It is hard to imagine what an impact this attention must have had on Higgins. Within the space of one week following the publication of the *Life* magazine feature, she had an offer from one of Hollywood's most powerful agents to represent her and an invitation from a top movie producer at Paramount to visit the studio, knowing that Paramount was "insisting" on the opportunity to bid on the rights to produce her story – all of this transmitted by cable to the battlefield.

At the time of this cable traffic Higgins was traveling from the north of Seoul, where she was covering the Seventh Marines Division,¹⁴ to North Korea itself, where she reported on the advance of the Army's Fifth Cavalry Regiment above the 38th parallel.¹⁵ Higgins also was working on her book, *War in Korea*, which was going to be published by Doubleday. With an eye on capitalizing on her newfound fame and her upcoming book, Higgins signed a contract in October with W. Colston Leigh, Inc. to schedule lecture events for her. W. Colston Leigh had been a leading booking agency since it was founded in 1929, and remains so today.¹⁶

¹³ Perlberg, "Cable to Marguerite Higgins."

¹⁴ Marguerite Higgins, "War Is Over? Marines Find out Somebody Forgot to Tell Reds.," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 2, 1950, 1.

¹⁵ Marguerite Higgins, "G.I.s Cheer Order to Cross Line; 'We Want to Get the War Over'," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 9, 1950, 1.

¹⁶ W. Colston Leigh, *www.Leighbureau.com* (2003).

Higgins' celebrity was promoted even further by the fact that she returned to the U.S. for important personal appearances within three weeks of the feature article on her in *Life* magazine. While the timing of this visit was dictated by the *Herald Tribune*, a schedule in which exposure in the nation's leading magazine was followed up with speeches and additional media exposure might just as well have been dreamed up by a top press agent to enhance Higgins' fame that much more.

Higgins returned to New York to speak at the *Herald Tribune* Forum, the annual conference on contemporary issues held by the newspaper. The Forum was a three-day conference held at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The event was attended by two thousand people, captured by a battery of photographers and spoken into a dozen microphones.¹⁷ As its prestige increased, The Forum became a venue for important government officials, academic and other intellectual leaders, and business executives to speak on the weighty topics chosen each year as the theme. The Forum was an important national event, covered by live network radio broadcast across the country. Because of the radio and other national coverage of the Forum, the event contributed to the *Herald Tribune's* position as an important national newspaper. In addition, the Forum events had a business purpose, reflecting Mrs. Reid's long-held responsibility for advertising sales. The *Herald Tribune's* advertising department worked with their clients to create special advertising copy that tied into a Forum's theme.¹⁸

¹⁷ "Speakers Face Dozen Cameras," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 29, 1950, 4.

¹⁸ Alfred B. Stanford, "Meeting with Helen Reid and Helen Hiatt Waller," August 16, 1950, D 248, Helen Rogers Reid Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

By 1950, Helen Hiatt Waller had been hired by Mrs. Reid to produce the *Herald Tribune* Forum. Waller had prior experience as a reporter before joining the *Herald Tribune* as Forum Director.¹⁹ These annual events were enormously complex and required many months of planning and work to produce. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in Korea in June, the theme for the 1950 Forum already had been set as the “Economic State of the Nation,” and speakers were lined up to make presentations on that topic.²⁰ With the Korean War dominating the world’s interest, the Forum theme was changed to “Mobilizing America’s Strength for World Security” and Reid and Waller scrambled to line up a new roster of speakers.²¹

It is very possible that the sudden fame achieved by Higgins as a result of the feature on her in *Life* magazine caused Mrs. Reid and Helen Hiatt Waller to decide to fly her back from Korea to make a presentation at the 1950 Forum. Research in the archival collection of Helen Rogers Reid for this study uncovered an agenda for the event that had been prepared just prior to publication of the *Life* magazine story. This initial agenda for the event did not include Higgins as a presenter.²² The inclusion of Higgins on the list of Forum speakers, however, put Higgins in the company of some of America’s most important leaders. They included W. Averill Harriman, special assistant to the President, Frank W. Abrams, chairman of the board of the Standard Oil Company, Leon Keyserling, chairman of the President’s Council

¹⁹ Helen Heitt Waller, "Background," Undated, D 288, Helen Rogers Reid Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

²⁰ Helen Heitt Waller, "Economic State of the Nation - Forum Theme," June 1950, D 247, Helen Rogers Reid Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

²¹ "Forum Opens 19th Annual Session Today," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 23, 1950, 1.

²² Helen Heitt Waller, "List of Asked, Accepted Forum Speakers," September 29, 1950, D 247, Helen Rogers Reid Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

of Economic Advisors, Stuart Symington, chairman of the National Security Resources Board, Thomas K. Finletter, Secretary of the Air Force, Mrs. Hiram Cole Houghton, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Dr. Douglas McGregor, president of Antioch College, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the U.N., Lester B. Pearson, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Walter P. Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers union, H.J. Heinz 2nd, president of H.J. Heinz Company and chairman of the United States Council of the International Chamber of Commerce, General Mark W. Clark, U.S. Senator Herbert R. O'Connor of Maryland, and U.S. Senator Paul H. Douglas of Illinois.²³

Higgins' celebrity not only was enhanced by her inclusion among such an extraordinary list of Forum participants, but also because of the media coverage that the event received. The *Herald Tribune*, of course, gave the Forum front-page exposure during the three-day event. Higgins received additional exposure from broadcast of portions of the Forum on three leading radio networks, the American Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System, and the Mutual Broadcasting System, in addition to local New York radio stations WINS, WMCA, and WNYC. The National Broadcasting Company included the Forum in its *Voices and Events* current affairs program. And the Voice of America broadcast the entire program worldwide in twenty-four languages.²⁴

²³ "Herald Tribune Forum Program - Index of Addresses," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 29, 1950, 4.

²⁴ "Forum Opens 19th Annual Session Today." *New York Herald Tribune*, p.1.

Higgins addressed the Forum on the event's last day. Her presentation was scheduled among speeches by some of the most important participants, Stuart Symington, General Mark Clark, Senators O'Connor and Douglas, and Secretary of the Air Force Finletter.²⁵ Higgins was introduced by Mrs. Reid, who said:

“A number of years ago Amelia Earhart made the statement that war would never end until women went to the front as well as men. I think she was right for the complete stupidity of war will never be proven by a unilateral action on the part of one division of the human race. Perhaps if the aggressor Reds had seen Marguerite Higgins they would have retreated more rapidly. In any event she showed that professional responsibility and human courage have no sex.

“Her work in Korea was not unexpected by the *Herald Tribune*. Marguerite had shown her stuff some years ago. She is a veteran newspaper worker of eight years on the *Herald Tribune* after having served an apprenticeship on several newspapers in California. Among the range of assignments which she was given as a member of the city staff were the Hartford Circus fire, Chinatown's war effort and Connecticut politics. Six years ago she was sent abroad and, after working in London and Paris, she became a war correspondent in Germany and Austria. At the close of the war she was made chief of the Berlin Bureau.

“When she was ousted from Korea by General Walker, the injustice was quickly righted by the Supreme Commander, General MacArthur. He settled the matter immediately on a merit basis following a cable of protest by me. I was glad to be wakened in the middle of the night by his reply. His message read: ‘Ban on women correspondents in Korea has been lifted pd. Marguerite Higgins is held in highest professional esteem by everyone pd. Signed MacArthur Commander in Chief Far East Command Tokyo Japan.’

“I know, however, that the great cause of non-discrimination was helped to considerable extent by the individual involved. The [comment of a] correspondent of another paper who commented at the time follows: ‘Higgins set up her own howl when she heard the ban and is now fighting it out with the Eighth Army. I fell sorry for the Eighth Army. Higgins is about as winsome as a maddened adder.’

“I can think of no one who wants to be ‘winsome.’ A good worker wants to win on the right basis and the *Herald Tribune* is proud of the work of Marguerite Higgins.”²⁶

²⁵ "Speakers Face Dozen Cameras." *New York Herald Tribune*, p.4.

²⁶ Helen Rogers Reid, "Remarks Introducing Marguerite Higgins at *Herald Tribune* Forum," October 25, 1950, D 288, Helen Rogers Reid Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

Higgins may have been included in the roster of Forum speakers because of her sudden fame; or, as alluded to in Mrs. Reid's introduction, because she was a woman or due to the notoriety of her expulsion from Korea. The speech Higgins gave, however, only made brief mention of some of her Korean battlefield adventures. She gave the audience a call-to-arms for a much wider conflict with the Communists. Higgins said that the North Korean invasion should be a wake-up call to the ambitious intentions of Russia, and warned that America must be prepared to combat Communism elsewhere in Asia, especially Indo-China. Higgins noted how the American support of South Korea had a positive impact on anti-communist political factions in Japan and elsewhere. Higgins stated that the United States was in a confrontation with Russia that would end in war or diplomatic retreat by the Soviet Union.²⁷

While Higgins was in New York, she made other speeches as well. Mrs. Reid was always the person who introduced her. Mrs. Reid made note of this fact when, in her introduction of Higgins at the West Side Association dinner, she joked, "everywhere that Marguerite went, her Reid was sure to go." In the introduction, Mrs. Reid acknowledged Higgins' fame. "But you want me to tell you something about Marguerite," Mrs. Reid said. "It's a bit hard to add to what you have all read in *Life, Time, Newsweek* . . ."²⁸ At the Sales Executives Club luncheon Mrs. Reid noted

²⁷ Marguerite Higgins, "Miss Higgins Says Korea Awoke America to Communist Danger," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 26, 1950, 21.

²⁸ Reid, "Remarks Introducing Marguerite Higgins at West Side Association Dinner."

that Higgins had made a sacrifice leaving Korea and was anxious to get back.²⁹

On December 6th Higgins was back at the front in Korea. She was covering one of the bloodiest battles ever fought by the U.S. Marines. The battle took place at the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. Because of information received through diplomatic channels, Washington now believed that the Russians and Chinese no longer wanted to support the Korean conflict. Based on this assumption the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered General MacArthur to destroy the North Korean army, saying “in attaining this objective, you are authorized to conduct military operations . . . north of the 38th Parallel . . .” MacArthur sent two Marine divisions north to the area of the Chosin Reservoir in an attempt to cut off and destroy North Korean troops that were retreating. The Marine divisions were attacked by Chinese troops who separated the units and forced the Americans to fight in a long, bloody withdrawal.

Higgins arrived on December 6th as the Marines, under the command of General O. P. Smith, were preparing to break out from Koto-ri near the reservoir. Her plan was to remain with the troops around the clock as they fought their way back to safety. Also arriving on that day was Lieutenant General Lemuel Shepherd, who was commander of all Marines in the Pacific region. Shepherd not only wanted to inspect the situation, he told Smith that he planned to stay with the troops as they moved toward Hungnam. To General Smith, the prospect of having a woman reporter killed or captured was bad enough; the thought of the same thing happening to a lieutenant general of Marines was out of the question. Smith asked both of them

²⁹ Helen Rogers Reid, "Remarks Introducing Marguerite Higgins at the Sales Executives Club Luncheon," October 31, 1950, D 288, Helen Rogers Reid Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

to leave. Shepherd agreed. Higgins complained. Shepherd described what happened next.

“Just as I was about to board the plane, my old friend Lewie Puller [Colonel “Chesty” Puller] showed up with a very irate Marguerite Higgins in tow. It was clear that he was quite interested in getting rid of her. ‘General,’ He said, ‘would you take this woman with you?’ Poor Maggie . . . Now she wanted me to intercede and ask O. P. to let her stay. ‘This is the biggest story of the war,’ she pleaded. ‘I don’t want to miss it, General.’”³⁰

Higgins flew out with Shepherd. On December 7th she filed a dispatch that ran on page one the next day under the headline, “How Marines Cut Way Out of Red Trap.”³¹

One month later Higgins left Korea again. It is apparent that when she had been in New York to speak at the Forum, Higgins had worked out an agreement with her editors to travel to Taipei, Formosa and Hong Kong to assess the growing threat that the Chinese Communist government would attempt to take over Formosa and oust its leader Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Because of U.S. security commitments to the Formosan government, this could have set off a direct military confrontation between the United States and China.³²

Consequences of fame.

Higgins was not the only woman to cover Korea (Julia Edwards noted that she and other women were assigned there as well), but Higgins was the most celebrated because of her exploits and accomplishments as the lone female correspondent during the early months of the war. The publication of Higgins’ book, *War in Korea*, the

³⁰ Russ, *Breakout: The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, Korea 1950*, p.398.

³¹ Marguerite Higgins, "How Marines Cut Way out of Red Trap," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 8 1950, 1.

³² Marguerite Higgins, "Articles on Communist Chinese Threat to Formosa," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 14-18, 1951.

coverage of her by the national press, especially her feature in *Life* magazine, and the exposure she received through speaking engagements had important effects that are relevant to the discussion of her legacy. For example, it is argued that Higgins made a contribution to securing equal opportunities for women journalists to cover war and other traditional male domains. That contribution showed itself in changing the attitudes of male editors about making such assignments to women. The proof of that change was seen in the large number of women who covered the Vietnam War. A more personal and compelling example of Higgins' contribution on this point was found in research for this study in a letter written to her in May 1951 by Lowell M. Limpus, chief of the United Nations bureau of *The New York News*. Limpus wrote:

“This letter constitutes a sincere apology to you for a number of unkind things that this grizzled old military writer has said about women war correspondents in the past. I have just finished reading your book, *War in Korea*, and I am prepared to eat my words. This represents a very radical change in viewpoint on my part and it took a lot to change it. You have succeeded in doing so, however . . .

[On the subject of analyzing professional military matters] I'm afraid I've taken the position that it was simply silly for women to try to understand what was going on. I thought I was right but you proved I was wrong.

My own experience leads me to understand how tough a time you must have had of it, and I suspect the wise guys among your colleagues didn't make it easy for you. “

While I'm apologizing, I might as well . . . retract what I've said about women correspondents being always a definite drag on the forces in the field.

You sound to me like a pretty good newspaperman and that's the highest accolade I can accord.”³³

Another effect resulting from Higgins achievements and celebrity was the degree to which she was a role model and motivating factor for women to enter the field. In an interview with Kluger, Barbara Belford remembered that Higgins was her

³³ Lowell M. Limpus, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," May 11, 1951, Box 2, Correspondence L, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

role model because she had become a foreign correspondent at such a young age.³⁴ In her review of May's book, Buresh commented on the impact Higgins had on young women:

“Small wonder that my generation of cub reporters saw Higgins not as a role model (an anemic phrase), but as an idol. One of my colleagues today, writer Caryl Rivers, remembers that, as a seventeen-year-old copygirl in Washington, she staked out places likely to give her a glimpse of the fabulous Higgins at work. ‘I gladly would have kissed her feet,’ Rivers recalls.”³⁵

On the other hand, the fame Higgins achieved may have had an effect on attitudes towards her. Once a person becomes well known, people often want more information about them than just what made them famous, they want to know about them as celebrities³⁶ – and that includes intimate details of their private lives. Two aspects of this may have affected Higgins. First, once a celebrity's life becomes a public concern there are few restrictions to talking and writing about their sexual behavior, especially in the case of an attractive woman. Second, this was especially true of someone whose behavior, professional or personal, was not consistent with that which was expected of them.³⁷ Thus, following publication of the article in *Life* magazine, Higgins became a prime target for rumor and allegation about the most intimate details of her personal life because she was an attractive, young woman who

³⁴ Barbara Belford, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 2, Folder 25, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

³⁵ Bernice Buresh, "Maggie, Gal Reporter," *Columbia Journalism Review*, January / February 1984, 55-6.

³⁶ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Atheneum, 1987), p.57.

³⁷ Richard Schickel, *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1985), p.83.

violated the prescribed rule that being a war correspondent was a role reserved for men.

Post-Korea.

With the glow of fame still bright from the articles in *Life* and other magazines, interest from a top agent, producer and motion picture studios, and an agency booking speaking engagements in anticipation of the publication of a book, the future must have looked very bright to Higgins at the end of 1950. Her book, *War in Korea*, was published in April 1951 and was a Book of the Month Club selection. On April 11th, President Truman relieved General MacArthur of his command in the Far East and replaced him with General Matthew Ridgeway. At the time, Higgins was on a U.S. lecture tour, traveling in the mid-West. She paused to write two articles about General MacArthur for the newspaper.³⁸ Higgins continued her lecture appearances until the end of July. In August 1951 Higgins traveled to Europe to begin a series of articles for the *Herald Tribune*, entitled "Around Russia's Curtain" that reported on the effect that Communism was having on countries and individual world leaders. Higgins interviewed Generalissimo Francisco in Spain, Marshall Tito in Yugoslavia, the King of Siam, Queen Frederika in Greece, the Shah of Iran, Nehru in India, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Bao Dai, the Chief of State of Viet Nam, and Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa.³⁹

³⁸ Marguerite Higgins, "Marguerite Higgins Recalls a Prophetic Talk," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 12, 1951, 3; Marguerite Higgins, "Review by Marguerite Higgins of MacArthur Stand in Dispute," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 13, 1951, 3.

³⁹ Marguerite Higgins, "Interview with Franco: How He'd Help in War," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 6, 1951, 1; Marguerite Higgins, "Tito Interview: He'd Fight for West," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 27, 1951, 1; Marguerite Higgins, "King of Siam, in Switzerland, Proves a Milder Man Than His 'Ancestor' in Broadway Show," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 30, 1951, 17; Marguerite

On her 1951 Federal income tax return, Higgins listed her occupation as “self-employed writer and lecturer.” In 1950, as a full-time *Herald Tribune* employee she had been earning \$135 per week - \$7,020 annually.⁴⁰ In 1951 her income jumped 370% to over \$26,000. Most of this (\$11,450) was earned from lecture fees. The next largest source (\$10,800) was from book and periodical royalty and fee payments. The *Herald Tribune* accounted for only \$2,950 in income, which can be accounted for by the weeks worked at the beginning of the year and during the writing of the “Around Russia’s Curtain” series (at an estimated salary increase from the prior year).⁴¹

The reason Higgins received so little compensation from the *Herald Tribune* in 1951 is that she took a leave of absence from the newspaper.⁴² Given the amount of money she earned that year and her celebrity status, it is reasonable to assume that Higgins questioned whether she should return to the newspaper. In a letter to her parents in September 1951 Higgins wrote that her “plans for spring are in a state of formation.”⁴³ Following her travels for the “Around Russia’s Curtain” series in the

Higgins, "Greece's Queen Frederkka Would Welcome U.S. Bases," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 10, 1951, 17; Marguerite Higgins, "America Is Seen Losing Prestige in Middle East by Letting Down Iran," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 18, 1951, 25; Marguerite Higgins, "Nehru Interview: India Differs with U.S. On Method, Not Goal," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 24, 1951, 1; Marguerite Higgins, "Pakistan Aims for Moslem Renaissance," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 27, 1951, 25; Marguerite Higgins, "Bao Dai Says He'd Call on U.N. For Help If Many Red Chinese Joined War against Him," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 4, 1951, 29; Marguerite Higgins, "Miss Higgins Interviews Chiang," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 15, 1951, 1.

⁴⁰ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.249.

⁴¹ Marguerite Higgins, "Federal Income Tax Return," 1951, Box 9, Tax Records, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁴² Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.234.

⁴³ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Parents," September 1951, Box 8, Correspondence, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

fall of 1951, Higgins planned to resume her lecture tour on the East Coast in November and December, and then go back to California.⁴⁴

It is apparent that Higgins contracted an illness, perhaps during her overseas travels, that caused her to cancel many, if not most, of her speaking engagements that were scheduled through February 1952. In Higgins' archives there is correspondence related to cancellations during this period in Charlotte, Manhattan NY, Chicago, Brooklyn NY and elsewhere. One incident occurred on January 18, 1952 at a meeting of a women's civic club. Higgins showed up but obviously was so ill that she could not give an adequate lecture. The club's president wrote to Higgins' agent and asked for the group's money back.⁴⁵ In her autobiography, Higgins makes reference to this time of trial.

“Having been sick, I was soon very broke. For I was economically reckless. And although my work in Korea and all the attendant publicity had brought a lot (by newspaper standards) of quick magazine, book, and lecture money, I had banged my way through my unaccustomed riches with the same energy with which I used to pound out page-one news to meet a deadline.”⁴⁶

In this same section of her book, Higgins gives details of the emotional problems she was facing. She was in love with General William (Bill) Hall. Their relationship, which began in Berlin, continued when Higgins was in Korea. In notes in her diary made when she was covering the war in September 1950, Higgins wrote

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Marguerite Higgins, "Cancellations of Speaking Engagements," December 1951 - February 1952, Box 8, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁴⁶ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.244.

that it was “good that Bill [is] so near” and stressed the importance of “Bill loving me.”⁴⁷

After Higgins returned from Korea, she moved to San Francisco.⁴⁸ It is likely that she settled in the Bay area because that was where Hall was stationed. He was in charge of the 4th Air Force located at Hamilton Air Force base just over thirty miles north of Oakland.⁴⁹ By some point in late 1951 or early 1952, Hall apparently broke off their relationship. Higgins wrote, “I learned of my breakup with the man I deeply loved.”⁵⁰

By this time Higgins had become an award-winning foreign correspondent. In 1951, for her work as a war correspondent, Higgins shared the Pulitzer Prize with Keyes Beech and Fred Sparks (*Chicago Daily News*); Homer Bigart (*New York Herald Tribune*); and Relman Morin and Don Whitehead (Associated Press). In addition, Higgins had received the George Polk Memorial Award, and the Poor Richard Citation of the Poor Richard Club of Philadelphia, among others. She had been named Woman of the Year by the Associated Press, and she had received a special award from the New York Newspaper Women’s Club. All of these prizes and

⁴⁷ Marguerite Higgins, "Diary Entry," September 1950, Box 8, Diary, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁴⁸ Keyes Beech, "Telegram to Marguerite Higgins," June 18, 1951, Box 2, Folder 24, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁴⁹ "Biography of Lieutenant General William E. Hall, U.S.A.F," (Public Information Division, Department of the Air Force, August 1960).

⁵⁰ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.243.

awards, Higgins wrote, were “not a cure for the problem of the moment – an aching heart.”⁵¹

At this time, there is evidence that Higgins was exploring ways to transform her career, moving away from reporting on events for a daily newspaper and perhaps trying to use her fame to work in other areas of journalism. While some of the archival material concerning this period has been published previously, particularly by Keeshen in her doctoral dissertation on Higgins, research for this study located other documents that provide a new perspective on Higgins’ career objectives and the relationship she had with the executives at the *Herald Tribune* during the period covering 1952 to 1955.

Higgins made reference in a letter that she had purchased a television set “to familiarize myself with the medium.”⁵² While the letter is dated only as being written in March, it is assumed that this refers to 1952, just prior to the start of a weekly television series in San Francisco that featured Higgins. She obviously had discussed her television series with producer Walter Wanger at Allied Artists (who coincidentally was the producer of the motion picture *Foreign Correspondent*) because he wrote her on March 13 saying, “if there is anything I can do to help with your television program, please don’t hesitate.”⁵³ In May 1952, KPIX, the CBS affiliate in San Francisco, issued a press release in which it announced that Higgins would begin a weekly news interview program on Sunday evenings at 8 PM, called

⁵¹Ibid., p.244.

⁵² Marguerite Higgins, "Unidentified Letter," March 1952, Box 2, Correspondence Misc., Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁵³ Walter Wanger, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," March 13, 1952, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

Marguerite Higgins News Close-Ups.⁵⁴ While Higgins was successful in breaking into television, she aspired to work in this new medium at a higher level and do so back in New York. In a letter to Joseph W. Bailey, who worked for the John E. Gibbs & Company management agency in New York, Higgins said that she viewed her local, West Coast television program as beneath her level in the profession.

“As you can see from the enclosed, I’ve started a one woman close-up for KPIX (CBS affiliate) . . . It’s very small time and I think I wouldn’t have gotten involved if all those doctor bills hadn’t frightened me into thinking that I better have some income, even if picayune, or have my financial morale undermined completely. . . . KPIX of their own volition offered me a sustaining deal on an informal arrangement. I only wish I was doing it from the East, cuz as you know I loathe it out here. Tried to get the local NBC affiliate to do a deal but couldn’t get through to the station manager. I’m getting uppity and don’t like being brushed off by San Francisco secretaries.

I mentioned above that filmed interviews also form part of the program on occasion. The localities [locals] gasp at the questions I ask but they wouldn’t startle anyone regularly acquainted with Washington or New York reporting. The people out here are inclined to be awed and therefore gentle in their questioning, all of which is an advantage to me, natch, cuz tough questions make better TV than does trivia. To give you an idea of what caused a furor locally here is my opening to Kefauver. ‘Would you please tell our audience, Mr. Senator, what qualities you have that you think would make you a good president of the United States?’”⁵⁵

John E. Gibbs and Company apparently was representing Higgins at this time, because Joe Bailey answered her letter, saying they were trying to get something for her in television and that he was hoping to work something out with DuMont, which was a small television network at the time.⁵⁶ Following the launch of Higgins’

⁵⁴ KPIX Television, "Marguerite Higgins News Close-Ups," May 25, 1952, Box 8, Close-ups, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁵⁵ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Joseph W. Bailey," Undated, Box 2, Correspondence B, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁵⁶ Joseph W. Bailey, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," June 24, 1952, Box 2, Correspondence B, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

television show on KPIX, she and Bill Hall were married on April 21, 1952. Higgins wrote, “. . . after many, many months, the rift was finally healed. Despite the scars and despite the risks, we were married.”⁵⁷

It is clear that Higgins was in discussion with the *Herald Tribune* about her return to the newspaper in the early spring of that year. In the March 1952 letter in which Higgins said she bought a television set, she also wrote that “as of August 1, I am going back to work for the *Herald Tribune* at \$165 a week.”⁵⁸ The timing of her return to the newspaper coincided with the transfer of her husband to Mitchell Air Force base in Nassau County, New York, in September 1952.⁵⁹ Mitchell field is less than thirty miles from the *Herald Tribune*'s offices in New York City.

On August 5th, at the time Higgins and Hall were moving east, she received a letter from the *Herald Tribune*'s managing editor, George Cornish, addressed to her at her parent's home on Chabot Court in Oakland. Cornish sent news that, “We will put you on the payroll effective August 15th.” Regarding her assignment, Cornish wrote, “I do not believe the developments in Egypt and Iran . . . justify your canceling plans to go first to the Far East. Report to Everett [Walker, assistant managing editor] until Frank Kelly [foreign editor] gets back around Sept 1.”⁶⁰ By October 1952,

⁵⁷ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.245.

⁵⁸ Higgins, "Unidentified Letter."

⁵⁹ "Biography of Lieutenant General William E. Hall, U.S.A.F."

⁶⁰ George Cornish, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," August 5, 1952, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

Higgins again was traveling as a foreign correspondent for the *Herald Tribune* and back on page one with a dispatch from New Delhi.⁶¹

On January 17, 1953, Higgins wrote a letter to Cornish that indicated she wanted to shift her newspaper work from news coverage to feature writing – specifically, doing interviews of world leaders. In this letter Higgins tried to convince Cornish that the newspaper should consider the investment they had made in her over the years, and that she should travel and do interviews.

“I thought it might be easier for you if I restated here some of my general thinking about my immediate future with the paper.

First of all, I hope you consider me a person into which the paper has put considerable investment in the past and with dividends yet to come.

My main interest is keeping my name in the paper in performance of any type of assignment that won't detract from the professional standing I have built. It would seem reasonable that this interest is mutual to the paper and to myself. I'm completely open to suggestion.

In trying to analyze what I could do best, I have taken into consideration that in not being tied down to a regular eight hours of work, I'd have complete mobility. I could go on a very short notice to Washington, Portland, Yugoslavia or Korea. That's why some kind of special interview project seemed to me the best way of taking advantage of this mobility. It wouldn't necessarily have to be a Q&A text. I think that position and play as well as some kind of label given to the feature ought to be enough to attract good people as interviewees. Perhaps just a little slug line saying “Special Interview.” Would be enough to distinguish the feature.

As far as I am concerned, I'd be happy to work for very little and just for the main paper and for its subsidiaries during a trial period – something say \$70 as a retainer for expenses, with \$40 for each printed interview.

As you can see, I am very flexible.

If for some reason, the *Herald Tribune* has no use for my services, please don't hesitate to tell me so frankly.”⁶²

⁶¹ Marguerite Higgins, "Marguerite Higgins in New Delhi," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 22, 1952, 1.

⁶² Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to George Cornish," January 17, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

While Higgins clearly was trying to sell Cornish on an interview series, not unlike her previous “Around Russia’s Curtain” interviews with world leaders that were published in fall 1951, there are other elements of the letter that raise questions about Higgins’ relationship to the newspaper at this point. Only five months after Cornish brought her back at a salary of \$165 per week,⁶³ in this letter Higgins offered to work for even less. The answer to this question likely is found in understanding the financial condition of the newspaper at that time. Reporter Crist remembered, “In those days, particularly in the 1950s, as they were going toward the end of their rope [which] the Reids were, it was a matter of not hiring very many people. The *Tribune* was not in very good shape.”⁶⁴

Another factor is that Higgins’ proposal was that she would do interviews; and she may already have told Cornish that this is what she wanted to do even it meant less compensation. Further, Higgins thought that she could make additional revenue through syndication of the interviews by the *Herald Tribune* syndicate. Bill Weeks, manager of the *Herald Tribune* syndicate was to check into this.⁶⁵ Finally, it appears that Higgins anticipated that the newspaper might not take her offer, perhaps because she was aware of the *Herald Tribune*’s financial situation.

Regardless of the questions raised by the change in compensation structure from a salary in August 1952 to her proposal of a retainer in January 1953, Higgins confirmed in another letter to Cornish in early 1953 that she, at least, considered

⁶³ Cornish, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins."

⁶⁴ Crist, "Interview by Author."

⁶⁵ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to George Cornish," March 18, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

herself to have been in continuous employment by the newspaper. Higgins, who joined the *Herald Tribune* in 1942, referred to her “eleven years with the paper.” In this letter Higgins continued to sell her idea of conducting interviews with national and world leaders.

“... my really deep interests lie in the field of foreign affairs. Additionally national affairs as they impinge on foreign affairs. Nine of my eleven years with the paper have been spent getting an unusually intensive education on Soviet communism at work politically and tactically in Europe, on Soviet aggression in Korea and on the cold war in the critical countries.

Trying to be positive I asked myself: well what is it that you think you would be best at. I came up with the answer COLD WAR correspondent.

Fortunately it fits with the interviews to this extent. Wouldn't it give a neat theme for instance to have a series of twelve top “world leaders and national figures” on various aspects of the cold war.”⁶⁶

Turning point.

The beginning of 1953 appeared to be a turning point for Higgins. Either she would continue with the *Herald Tribune* doing interviews or look for opportunities elsewhere. In February, Higgins wrote David Lawrence, editor of *U.S. News and World Report* magazine, asking to meet with him to discuss working for his magazine.⁶⁷ The fact that Higgins' continued employment with the *Herald Tribune* was uncertain at this time is reflected in a letter she wrote to President Eisenhower on January 24, 1953 in which she described herself as “not being active in newspapers at the moment.”⁶⁸ Higgins continued to pursue opportunities in broadcasting as well. In

⁶⁶ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to George Cornish," 1953, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁶⁷ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to David Lawrence," September 22, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence L, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁶⁸ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower," January 24, 1953, Box 2, Eisenhower, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

a letter to Paul Adler, Affiliated Program Services, she authorized him “to act as my representation through May 1953 in securing a radio or TV program of my own.” Higgins directed him to investigate possible appearances by her on other shows as well. “I consider myself free to accept guest spots on various panels and programs,” she wrote.⁶⁹

In late February, the *Herald Tribune* accepted the offer that Higgins had made in her January 17th letter.⁷⁰ The retainer would start on March 9th.⁷¹ In early March interviews with Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek and American officials about the situation in Formosa appeared in the newspaper over Higgins’ byline.

Higgins was working on an interview series that would begin on April 12th and appear on Sunday each week in Section II, where the *Herald Tribune* printed in-depth news features and editorials. Higgins proposed a list of people she might write about, many of whom she knew personally or had interviewed previously. Her list included General Douglas MacArthur, General Lucius Clay, Senator Joseph McCarthy, Senator Wayne Morse, President Harry Truman, Dr. Trofim Lysenko (Russian refugee and geneticist), former President Herbert Hoover, Generalissimo Franco, Marshall Tito, and Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh (Iranian Prime Minister).⁷²

Higgins wanted to make the most of this opportunity, as shown in another letter to

⁶⁹ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Paul Adler," undated, Box 2, Correspondence A, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁷⁰ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Whitelaw Reid and George Cornish," February 21, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence R, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁷¹ George Cornish, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," February 26, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁷² Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to George Cornish," January 28, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

Cornish in which she tried to get mention of her interviews on the newspaper's front page.

“In the editorial note above the [interviews]. Perhaps it could be shortened to ‘this is another of a series of special interviews conducted by Miss Higgins with world leaders and national figures.’ This type of introduction appeals to potential interviewees.

Secondly, do you remember our discussion of the possibility of a front page box on Sunday announcing the presence in Section II of these interviews?”⁷³

The series appeared from April 12th through June 21st, and was given the promotional support that Higgins asked for in her letter to Cornish. Page one of the April 12th edition included a box containing the headline, “Marguerite Higgins Begins New Series.”⁷⁴ It said that in the series Higgins would “analyze new turns in the cold war with Russia.” The first article was an interview with Governor Thomas E. Dewey, who said that the U.S. must face the fact that Russia was still seeking world domination.⁷⁵ Most of the interviews were with American officials, conducted by Higgins in their offices in Washington or New York. Interviews with leaders overseas were based on questions and answers transmitted by cablegram.

It appears that Higgins met resistance from the editors at the *Herald Tribune* as she attempted to move away from reporting assignments toward writing feature articles. It is clear from a letter she wrote to General Clay that her newspaper viewed her as a news correspondent, not a columnist. Higgins wrote that the *Herald Tribune*

⁷³ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to George Cornish," March 3, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁷⁴ Marguerite Higgins, "Marguerite Higgins Begins New Series," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 12, 1952, 1.

⁷⁵ Marguerite Higgins, "Dewey Fears Truce Pitfalls," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 12, 1952, 2.

had “more or less condescended to let me start with a series of interviews with world leaders and national figures,” and that she was trying to convince the editors that, even though her experience was as a foreign correspondent, she “could be put to some use in this country.”⁷⁶ Higgins wrote to Carl Mydans and described her arrangement with the newspaper as an “easy assignment.”⁷⁷ Higgins nevertheless apparently felt depressed about her career and expressed her frustration to her father. On April 8th Lawrence Higgins wrote his daughter, “I don’t agree with you as to your status in the journalistic world. I think and everybody else thinks . . . you have done a fine job under very difficult circumstances. This is a flat period probably but time and patience will take care of the situation.”⁷⁸ Indeed, Higgins’ prospects improved soon after completion of the interview series when she made a trip to Hong Kong to write articles on the relationships mainland China had with the Russians and the West.⁷⁹

Although Higgins once again was covering international news for the *Herald Tribune*, this was a difficult period for her personally. She and General Hall were expecting their first child to be born in December. A month after Higgins returned from Hong Kong, Higgins gave birth prematurely and the baby died. At this time her financial relationship with the newspaper was not rewarding. Given that she was paid

⁷⁶ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to General Lucius D. Clay," April 1, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁷⁷ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Carl Mydans," February 23, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence M, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁷⁸ Lawrence Higgins, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," April 4, 1953, Box 8, Correspondence, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁷⁹ Marguerite Higgins, "Articles on China Relations," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 3-8, 1952.

only a \$70 retainer for expenses and \$40 for each printed interview, Higgins was not generating much net income from the *Herald Tribune*. Her expenses during this period included a salary for her secretary / assistant for producing the interviews.⁸⁰

In the fall of that year Higgins took four steps to redirect her career. First, Higgins decided to discuss her relationship with the *Herald Tribune* with the newspaper's owners, rather than continuing to correspond with George Cornish, the managing editor. At this time Whitelaw Reid was president of the *Herald Tribune*. Higgins wrote Whitelaw and asked for a meeting in which they would resolve her future with the newspaper. She made these points:

“what I might be able to do in the future association with the paper that would be to our mutual advantage.

“ ... I appreciated his [Cornish's] expression of the hope that my association with the paper would continue – a hope which of course I share.

“ ... I am eager to sort out the various alternatives and get my journalistic activities a little more regularized for the next year.”⁸¹

Second, Higgins contacted David Lawrence at *U.S. News and World Report* again to explore opportunities with his magazine. Higgins wrote, “I've been wanting for some time to explore the possibility of some form of association with your magazine.”⁸² Third, Higgins applied to the Ford and Guggenheim foundations for grants to write a “well documented report on Communist tactics in negotiations [that] would be of value to those in the Free World interested in understanding the

⁸⁰ Diana D. Postel, "Records of Employment by Marguerite Higgins," 1953 and 1954, Box 8, Records, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁸¹ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Whitelaw Reid," October 1, 1953, Box 2, Correspondence R, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁸² Higgins, "Letter to David Lawrence."

Communist World, the better to deal with it.”⁸³ And fourth, Higgins continued to explore television with an appearance on the NBC television news interview program, *Meet the Press*.⁸⁴

Higgins’ meeting with Whitelaw Reid apparently was successful in establishing a more structured and regular relationship with the newspaper. In 1954 Higgins made two major international trips that generated foreign news. In the spring Higgins traveled to Europe and Vietnam. In the fall she managed to get a visa to Russia and took a ten-week tour behind the Iron Curtain. Higgins traveled through Siberia, Soviet Central Asia, the Caucasus, White Russia, and the Ukraine. This tour generated a series of articles on Russia that began in the *Herald Tribune* on December 8th, and a book written by Higgins that was published the following year.⁸⁵

Washington bureau.

In the mid-1950s Higgins joined the *Herald Tribune*’s Washington bureau office. During the period she worked in Washington, Higgins signed a series of employment contracts with the *Herald Tribune*. While the initial contract she signed has been discussed in other writing about her, archival research for this study has identified terms agreed to in the second contract that have not been considered previously in analyzing her professional behavior during this period, or used in discussion of the opinions of her peers about that behavior.

⁸³ Marguerite Higgins, "Grant Request," January 1954, Box 8, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁸⁴ Lawrence Spivak, "'Meet the Press'," 1953, Lawrence Spivak Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

⁸⁵ Higgins, *Red Plush and Black Bread*.

Higgins joined the Washington bureau on May 16, 1955.⁸⁶ In a letter to Ogden Rogers Reid, who had recently taken over management responsibility for the newspaper from his brother Whitelaw, and to the new executive vice president Frank Taylor, Higgins outlined her understanding of their arrangement. She was to produce a column focusing on the Cold War for the newspaper's editorial page that would appear on Mondays, and be available for "special spot assignments anywhere in the country and ultimately abroad . . ."⁸⁷ She immediately would begin the process of trying to get a visa for entry into Russia for a "proposed trip to Vladivostock via the Trans Siberian railway."⁸⁸ Higgins traveled to Russia four months later. Once she was in Russia, Higgins was able to reopen the Moscow office for the *Herald Tribune*. The newspaper had not had a presence in the Russian capital since 1949.⁸⁹ Higgins remained in Moscow until December, when she returned to the Washington bureau.

The Washington bureau chief of the *Herald Tribune* in 1955 was Walter Kerr. Kerr recalled to Kluger that his management approach was flexible. Correspondents were encouraged to go after any story that sounded promising, even if it was outside their assigned beat. But reporters could not interfere with the work of a follow bureau

⁸⁶ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Ogden Rogers Reid and Frank Taylor," May 8, 1955, Box 10, Folder 234, Ogden Rogers Reid Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Joseph Newman, "Draft of Article About Experiences of American Reporter in USSR," 1949, Box 1, Joseph Newman Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

member, and had to clear incursions into another's assigned turf. Kerr said he treated Higgins "just like all the other reporters in the bureau."⁹⁰

In December 1955 Higgins wrote to Reid and said that the International News Service was interested in hiring her.⁹¹ Apparently in response to the possibility that Higgins would leave the paper, Reid took the unusual step of giving a reporter an employment agreement. On January 19, 1956, Higgins signed a two-year contract (with a two-year renewal clause) with the *Herald Tribune* stipulating that she was:

"a correspondent attached to the Washington bureau . . . on White House assignments, or on top-flight assignments as mutually determined from time to time by the Editor of the *Herald Tribune* and the author, and to write news stories, Special Articles or Column as assigned by the Head of the Washington bureau or the Editor."⁹²

Shortly after Higgins arrived at the Washington bureau, Bob Donovan, who had been *Herald Tribune* White House correspondent, began a leave of absence to write a book about President Eisenhower. Bureau chief Kerr then began the process of finding a replacement for Donovan. During the following months he talked with George Cornish, recently given the title of executive editor, about candidates. He decided to move political reporter Earl Mazo from the New York office to Washington. Kerr's decision was approved by Cornish and Ogden Rogers Reid. When Higgins heard about the move, she asked Kerr if she could go to New York and discuss with management why she was not given the assignment. Kerr did not know

⁹⁰ Walter B. Kerr, "Letter to Kathleen Keeshen," November 30, 1982, Box 7, Folder 148, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁹¹ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Ogden Rogers Reid," December 1955, Box 2, Correspondence R, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

⁹² New York *Herald Tribune*, "Contract with Marguerite Higgins," January 19, 1956, Box 10, Folder 234, Ogden Rogers Reid Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

about the contract.⁹³ It was not until 1981 that he found out about it and the fact that her agreement stipulated she was to cover the White House. Kerr reflected on the situation at the Washington bureau in 1956 in a letter he wrote to Kluger in 1982:

“And now Brownie [Ogden Rogers Reid] was in a bind. He had not told me about the contract and did not propose to. And yet Marguerite had the right to invoke it – even under the circumstance that Brownie had approved the Mazo assignment.

Brownie then gave her the job without explaining to me why and I went to see him in New York. All I can remember of that conversation is that he told me: ‘If I have made a mistake, it is up to you to protect (or support?) me.’”⁹⁴

By the time Reid reversed his decision and gave the job to Higgins, Mazo already had sold his house and moved to Washington. Humiliated by what had happened, Kerr resigned from the newspaper.⁹⁵

Don Whitehead replaced Walter Kerr as bureau chief in June 1956. Prior to taking over the bureau chief position, Whitehead was assured by Ogden Reid that he had complete management authority over Higgins, regardless of what the language of her contract said. Reid pointed out that the contract stipulated that Higgins was assigned to the White House “*or* [italics mine] on top-flight assignments as mutually determined from time to time by the Editor of the *Herald Tribune* [Reid] and the Author . . .” Reid then added that he “would exercise [his] authority in this respect through you [Whitehead] . . .”⁹⁶ In August 1956 Bob Donovan returned from his leave of absence and resumed his White House assignment. Higgins apparently

⁹³ Kerr, "Letter to Kathleen Keeshen."

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Whitelaw Reid, "Letter to Don Whitehead," March 12, 1956, Box 10, Folder 234, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

cooperated with this shift of assigned beats, as her contract called for *mutual* determination of her assignment.

Don Whitehead resigned the bureau chief position for health reasons in the fall of 1957 and Bob Donovan took over as head. During Whitehead's last months as bureau chief, he had to deal with controversy concerning Higgins' credentials to cover the House of Representatives and the Senate. The controversy arose because Benton and Bowles, Inc., a New York advertising agency, hired Higgins to write advertisements for Proctor and Gamble's Crest toothpaste.⁹⁷ The committee that governs membership in the Capitol press gallery notified Higgins that her advertising employment violated a rule that correspondents not be engaged in paid promotion or publicity work. Higgins responded by resigning her membership, and raised the question of what difference there was between being paid to do an ad and appearing on a television news show that was sponsored.⁹⁸

When Donovan took over as head of the Washington office, in the bureau chief's files he would have found the letter that Ogden Reid had written Whitehead explaining Higgins' contract.⁹⁹ In addition, if the concern about Higgins by his predecessors, Kerr and Whitehead, was as great as Donovan said,¹⁰⁰ then it is reasonable to assume that Whitehead discussed the issue with Donovan as part of the transition process. Several months remained in the term of Higgins' original

⁹⁷ Schuyler, "Pulitzer Prize Winner Writes Toothpaste Ads." *Editor and Publisher*, p.15

⁹⁸ "The Fine Print." *Time* p.70.

⁹⁹ Reid, "Letter to Don Whitehead."

¹⁰⁰ Robert J. Donovan, "Letter to Betty," January 15, 1983, Box 4, Folder 74, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

employment contract. The agreement contained a renewal clause that gave the *Herald Tribune* the right to extend the contract for an additional two-year term. While no documents exist in archives that confirm that the newspaper exercised its renewal option, Higgins signed a second contract on the date that would have been the end of the term of the two-year extension. This date of the second contract, and the fact that she continued to work in the Washington bureau until she resigned from the *Herald Tribune* in 1963 strongly indicate that the newspaper did extend her original contract. It is unlikely that Higgins would have been content to have her status decline to that of just another Washington based reporter. In a 1983 letter Donovan indicated that Higgins remained a force to be dealt with in the bureau during his early tenure.¹⁰¹

While Donovan very likely knew about Higgins' contract, he apparently did not feel constrained by it. Donovan took an aggressive stance regarding his own role, saying that he, as bureau chief, would write the most important stories regardless of who had the beat responsibility. He brought in David Wise to cover the White House, gave Warren Rogers the Pentagon, and assigned Higgins to the State Department. Donovan felt that by having "able, aggressive and independent" reporters covering the White House and the Pentagon, Higgins "could not go on free-wheeling the way she had been without blow-ups all over the place."¹⁰² Donovan gave an example of a step he took to constrain the work of Higgins. "Marguerite fought with me on the assignment to cover Nixon's [1957] trip to Moscow (the one

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

that produced the kitchen debate),” Donovan recalled, “but I sent Earl Mazo, who had regularly covered the vice-president.”¹⁰³

Research in the Marguerite Higgins Papers collection for this study found a letter by her that presented a very different perspective of her relationship with Donovan following the Nixon trip to Moscow. From Higgins’ letter it was clear that, contrary to Donovan’s assertion to Kluger, she actually went on this assignment as well. More important, however, her letter revealed Higgins to have been a person who, while pursuing her job in accordance with terms in her contract, tried to do so in a way that was respectful of Donovan. Higgins’ contract established that she had a reporting relationship with the New York office. Her letter was to Luke Carroll, who at the time Donovan took over the Washington bureau was appointed by Ogden Reid to work as the liaison officer between New York and the city bureaus and foreign desks. Referring to a possible trip to Russia by President Eisenhower, Higgins wrote:

“Also as you and George know from my cable from Warsaw, I’d hope also to go with President Eisenhower on his trip to the Soviet Union. This, please, (and perhaps it does need staying) is not to be considered an attempt to undermine Bob Donovan. I have no idea, indeed, what his views are now that the timing has been changed to bring the projected Russian trip so deeply into the hectic pre-election season. If he wants to go and can get away, believe me there would be more than enough for all of us to do, as I can testify from the frantic twenty hour day experience of the Nixon trip.”¹⁰⁴

Donovan cited another example of his difficulties with Higgins, when Soviet Premier Khrushchev visited Washington in September 1959. Donovan wanted to

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter Draft to Luke Carroll," Undated, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

cover the main story and told Higgins to stay out of the way. “. . . instead [Higgins] showed up at some sessions where Khrushchev was,” Donovan wrote, “and Khrushchev recognized her and she stole the show.”¹⁰⁵

On December 31, 1959 Higgins entered into her second contract with the *Herald Tribune*. Effective January 1st, Higgins would continue to submit a weekly column for the editorial page and she would receive a salary increase.¹⁰⁶ The new contract extended her coverage responsibilities to include “international conferences.”

The “correspondent is attached to the Washington Bureau . . . on White House assignments, or on top-flight assignments as mutually determined from time to time by the Editor . . . and the Author, and to write Special Articles or Column as assigned by the Head of the Washington Bureau or the Editor, and the Author shall be consulted on International Conferences . . . conferences at home or abroad when they have a particular bearing on the field of foreign affairs.”¹⁰⁷

A letter written by Donovan found in the Richard Kluger Papers suggests that Higgins tried to do her job in a way that was consistent with this new language in her contract, but met resistance by Donovan.

“. . . [she] suddenly told me one day that she would cover the Kennedy-Khrushchev conference in Vienna in 1961. . . . I told Marguerite, however, that the story was typically a White House assignment and that I was sending [David] Wise, who would be helped on the scene by our various European correspondents. . . . I discovered that Marguerite had gone off to Vienna on her own, ostensibly to do an article for a magazine. Wise complained of being put in a very uneasy spot in Vienna.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Donovan, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁰⁶ George Cornish, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," December 10, 1959, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁰⁷ New York *Herald Tribune*, "Contract with Marguerite Higgins," December 31, 1959, Box 8, Legal, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁰⁸ Donovan, "Letter to Betty."

While Donovan recalled his conflicts with Higgins, he also acknowledged her star power. Only seven years had passed since Higgins was featured in *Life* magazine.¹⁰⁹ Hollywood's interest in her life story never materialized. Higgins attributed this to "agent trouble,"¹¹⁰ an unlikely excuse given that she had one of Hollywood's top agents representing her.¹¹¹ Television never developed as an opportunity, although proposals continued to be made to her. In 1957, Lee Davis Productions discussed a daytime news show with her for the ABC Network.¹¹² Still, however, Donovan knew the value of her name. Warren Rogers recalled that Donovan used the fact that Higgins was in the Washington as a reason he should join the bureau.¹¹³ "It was my judgment that her name was an asset to the *Herald Tribune*," Donovan remembered, "which is one reason I never gave any serious thought to trying to have her assigned away from the Washington bureau."¹¹⁴ The high regard in which Higgins was viewed professionally at this time was evidenced by a letter Higgins received from Clare Booth Luce, editor, Congresswoman, Ambassador, and wife of *Time* magazine-founder Henry Luce. In January 1957, Luce wrote the following to Higgins.

¹⁰⁹ Mydans, "Girl War Correspondent." *Life*, p.51-60.

¹¹⁰ Marguerite Higgins, "Correspondence with Lela Rogers," October 17, 1953 to March 19, 1954, Box 2, Correspondence R, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹¹¹ Lew Wasserman, "Cable to Marguerite Higgins," October 6, 1950, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹¹² Lee Davis Productions, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," July 1957, Box 2, Correspondence D, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹¹³ Warren Rogers, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 12, Folder 261, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹¹⁴ Donovan, "Letter to Betty."

“You have grown steadily in stature as a fine reporter of world events. (I think our (or one) [*sic*] Anne O’Hare must be smiling on you now.) Today there are few better journalists than you. And I know that a woman has to work twice as hard and be twice as good to receive the same credit and attention that would be given a man for the same job.”¹¹⁵

Higgins’ social skills and high-level access became extremely important to the *Herald Tribune’s* Washington bureau. Throughout her career, Higgins had applied her social skills in a way that gave her access to high-level news sources. When Higgins was Berlin bureau chief, she was provided a large, luxurious house that had been requisitioned from the Germans by the occupying American Military Government.¹¹⁶ The house came with a cook-housekeeper, enabling Higgins to entertain on behalf of the *Herald Tribune*. Her evening dinner parties were frequented by people like General Lucius Clay, military head of the American Sector, Ernst Reuter, the Mayor of Berlin, Robert Murphy, U.S. Ambassador, Sir Brian Robertson, the British commanding general, and other dignitaries.¹¹⁷ Higgins referred to these parties at her home as ‘purpose parties,’ because while the military brass and local dignitaries were unwinding, she was asking questions and getting material for news stories.¹¹⁸

At her home in Georgetown, Higgins continued her practice of hosting social occasions for news sources, for example, by inviting Ezra T. Benson, Secretary of

¹¹⁵ Claire Booth Luce, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," January 2, 1957, Box 2, Correspondence L, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹¹⁶ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.160.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.160-75.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.160.

Agriculture, to meet Helen Rogers Reid at a dinner in early 1956.¹¹⁹ The fact that this invitation, which brought together a member of the President's Cabinet and the owner of the *Herald Tribune*, came from Higgins and not the chief of the paper's Washington bureau indicates Higgins' status in Washington and her importance to the newspaper. The high level at which Higgins operated in Washington was indicated by a letter she received from Ogden Reid in December 1956. Reid wrote, "Senator [Hubert] Humphrey spoke to me this morning in the highest terms with regard to you and your work."¹²⁰ After Higgins lost her Congressional press credentials in 1957, Andrew Glass, *Herald Tribune* reporter in the Washington Bureau, said, "it didn't stop her, didn't affect the way she operated, [she] would go straight to . . . [a] Senator's office."¹²¹

In Washington she became very close to the Kennedy family and had access to newly elected President John F. Kennedy to the degree that he wrote Higgins a three page, hand-written letter three days after his inauguration.¹²² [Higgins made reference to this letter in subsequent correspondence with President Kennedy. The original letter is not in Higgins' archives, and one can only speculate about its contents.] Higgins wrote an exclusive story on Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr. on December

¹¹⁹ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Secretary Ezra T. Benson," April 13, 1956, Box 2, Correspondence B, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹²⁰ Ogden Rogers Reid, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," December 7, 1956, Box 2, Correspondence R, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹²¹ Andrew Glass, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 5, Folder 101, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹²² Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to President John F. Kennedy," September 3, 1963, Box 4, Kennedy, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

12, 1960 that appeared on the front page of the *Herald Tribune*.¹²³ Higgins' "insider" position in Washington was dramatically demonstrated during the Lyndon Johnson administration when she hosted a luncheon at her home for White House aids Bill Moyers and Jack Valenti and United States Information Agency head Carl Rowan. Uninvited, President Johnson showed up with his staff to join the luncheon.¹²⁴

Another impressive example of Higgins' ability to reach deep inside the vault of protected information occurred in the Capital in 1962. The weekend before the Cuban missile crisis, it became apparent to the *Herald Tribune* Washington bureau that the U.S. military was activating units. Reporter Warren Rogers was told by his sources at the State Department and the Pentagon that this had to do with the situation in Berlin. Rogers worked on the story over the weekend. On Sunday, Higgins called in on her own and offered to help. She called back and said she heard that the call-up had to do with the Russians putting missiles in Cuba. Fred Farris, who was working in the Washington bureau over that weekend, remembered that Higgins' tip didn't check out with Roger's sources and that is why it was not used. After the facts were known, Farris said, Higgins was distressed that her story did not run.¹²⁵

In spite of all the traveling Higgins did during these years in Washington, she and her husband also started a family. A son was born in 1959, and a daughter one year later. Robert and Ethel Kennedy agreed to be godparents of their daughter.

¹²³ Marguerite Higgins, "Kennedy Sr. Tells of His Family: He Urged Son to Run for President? Nonsense.," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 12, 1960, 1.

¹²⁴ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p. 251.

¹²⁵ Fred Farris, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 4, Folder 80, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

In was during her years in Washington that a new allegation was raised about Higgins. Warren Rogers, who had worked for wire services for a dozen years before he joined the *Herald Tribune's* Washington bureau, implied that Higgins did not have the intellectual capability to understand the complex political issues she covered. Rogers claimed that he was asked to be present with Higgins in some interview situations because he "knew what questions to ask." Rogers' view was that, while in her State Department assignment Higgins had access to high-level deputy secretaries and undersecretaries, "she really didn't know what was going on."¹²⁶ Rogers added that when Higgins did come up with good information, "she didn't know what to do with it."¹²⁷ Steven White, a critic of Higgins from her time in Berlin, simply said that Higgins "was ignorant."¹²⁸

Vietnam.

Beginning in 1963 Higgins traveled to Vietnam to cover the fighting. Higgins wrote a contemporaneous summary of her experiences and views regarding Vietnam in her book, *Our Vietnam Nightmare*.¹²⁹ Higgins' book gave a detailed account of how her understanding of the conflict changed as a result of her field reporting that followed the 1963 suicides by Buddhist monks. As she set out to gather the facts, Higgins harbored the belief shared by most Americans that Buddhists were responding to religious persecution by Vietnam's President Diem, who was a

¹²⁶ Rogers, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Higgins, "Kennedy Sr. Tells of His Family: He Urged Son to Run for President? Nonsense.." *New York Herald Tribune*, p.1

¹²⁹ Higgins, *Our Vietnam Nightmare*.

Catholic. Interviews with military leaders in Saigon made it clear that the Defense Department and Central Intelligence Agency believed the Buddhist insurrection was political, not religious. She traveled from Saigon to Quang Ngai province to investigate the alleged burning of a Buddhist monk because he would not convert to President Diem's religion, Catholicism, and found the story not to be true. She saw how disconnected the Vietnam countryside was from Saigon, as the local Buddhists were unaware of religious suicides in the capital. Buddhist leader Thich Tri Quang invited Higgins to meet at the Xa Loi Pagoda, a center of insurgent activity, because he understood that Higgins had connections into the Kennedy administration. Higgins developed a profile of the political goals of this leader from her interview and came to understand that the Buddhist uprising was political and not religious at its source.

Higgins wrote that the disagreement about whether the United States was winning or losing the war heated up in the summer of 1963 in Saigon, when the resident American journalists raised their voices to say the United States had been losing the war from the very beginning. The American Mission in Saigon, which represented the administration in Washington, strongly disagreed with this characterization.”¹³⁰ Those officials said:

“How can the reporters . . . [say this]? None of the resident press corps have been out of Saigon – except for a couple of day-long helicopter trips – since June . . . Men like Major [Roger J. John] Kelly [of Quang Ngai] are busting to have reporters come up and see what they are doing. But the press isn't interested. And if we should try to get them interested, they would say we are stage-managing things.”¹³¹

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.107.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.123.

In April 1963, the Viet Cong had suffered a major defeat in Quang Ngai province, where the strategic-hamlet program was in place.¹³² This program was a village self-defense program implemented by the Diem government that attempted to turn all sixteen thousand South Vietnamese hamlets into fortified compounds. Higgins visited Major Kelly and walked through the hamlets in that area. Because she wrote about the military success at Quang Ngai, she was branded as shilling for the administration.

The debate over the accuracy of the news coverage of the Vietnam War extended far beyond what Higgins wrote. Several months prior to the Buddhist suicides, the Associated Press, United Press International and a number of newspapers became concerned that their correspondents stationed in Saigon had become biased against the Diem regime, believed that the Buddhists were victims of religious based attacks by the Vietnamese government, and had the attitude that the U.S. was losing the war. These news organizations sent others to Saigon to assess the situation. *Time* magazine's assessment was that the Saigon-based reporters were "such a tightly knit group that their dispatches tended to reinforce their collective judgment which was severely critical of practically everything."¹³³

Two correspondents who were not stationed in Saigon were singled out by the local correspondents and news media when they visited there and criticized the press. One was Joseph Alsop, who wrote:

"it is easy enough to paint a dark indignant picture without departing from the facts, if you ignore the majority of Americans who admire the

¹³² Ibid., p.112.

¹³³ "The Press: Foreign Correspondents: The Saigon Story," *Time* October 11, 1963, 55.

Vietnamese as fighters and seek out the one U.S. officer in ten who inevitably thinks that all foreigners fight badly. The same method used to report the doings of the Diem government has naturally been even more effective, since a great many of these doings have been remarkably misguided.”¹³⁴

The other correspondent singled out was Higgins. Journalist Flora Lewis and *New York Times* correspondent David Halberstam were among those who believed that Higgins was an unwitting spokesperson for the views of the administration in Washington, and that was the reason she was at odds with the reporters who were based on Saigon.¹³⁵ It is apparent that Higgins’ editors were questioning her reporting because it was not in line with the dispatches from the Saigon-based correspondents. When she wrote her editors and made a request to return to Vietnam, she added, “I fully understand that my copy [from previous trip] was hard to believe in light of what Halberstam was writing.¹³⁶ Conversely, Halberstam had his own problems because of Higgins. “When the *Times* queried their man in Saigon for his opinion about Maggie Higgins’ views, Halberstam became exasperated. Any more questions about ‘that woman’s copy,’ he cabled, ‘ and I resign, repeat, resign.’”¹³⁷

Higgins acknowledged to Alsop that they were on “the same wave length (more or less) on Vietnam,”¹³⁸ In addition, however, Higgins appeared to have

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, p.228.

¹³⁶ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Jim Bellows, Seymour Freidin and Richard Wald," Undated, Box 2, Correspondence B, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹³⁷ "The Press: Foreign Correspondents: The Saigon Story." *Time* p.55.

¹³⁸ Marguerite Higgins, "Letters to Joseph Alsop," December 1964 and January 1965, Box 2, Correspondence A, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

wanted to explain the press situation in Saigon to President Kennedy. Higgins wrote President Kennedy, making a request to see him. She said, "There are some things about these Americans [press and military in Saigon] and Saigon I'd like to talk to you about ..."¹³⁹

Time quoted Higgins as saying, "Reporters here would like to see us lose the war to prove they're right."¹⁴⁰ Higgins became known for that statement, which could be a factor in how her coverage of Vietnam influences her legacy. In 1965 Higgins wrote to John Hohenberg saying that in his book, *Foreign Correspondence: the Great Reporters and Their Times*,¹⁴¹ he had quoted her as follows, "Reporters here . . . would like to see us lose the war to prove they're right." "I don't believe I ever wrote that," Higgins stated, "or for that matter, said it, although *Time Magazine* so quoted me."¹⁴²

Columnist and *Newsday*

In 1963, Higgins was writing international news stories that regularly appeared in the first section and often on page one of the paper. In addition, starting from the time when she joined the Washington bureau eight years earlier, Higgins had been writing a column that appeared every Monday on the right-hand side of the editorial page, next to the cartoon. Among the other columns carried by *The Herald Tribune* was *Inside Report*, written by Robert Novak and Rowland Evans. In May,

¹³⁹ Higgins, "Letter to President John F. Kennedy."

¹⁴⁰ "The Press: Foreign Correspondents: The Saigon Story." *Time* p.55.

¹⁴¹ Hohenberg, *Foreign Correspondence: The Great Reporters and Their Times*, p.446.

¹⁴² Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to John Hohenberg," May 18, 1965, Box 2, Correspondence H, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

James Bellows, who had joined the paper the year before as managing editor, decided to increase the frequency of *Inside Report* from one insertion a week to six days a week. On May 28th Bellows wrote the following memorandum to Higgins:

“After full consideration, I feel that with present editorial page format and plan, there is no place for the column you have been writing. This, as you know, is no reflection on the column or its value - - only that we have surely reached, or maybe passed, the proper number of Washington columnists with the addition of Evans and Novak. I hope you understand this, as regretful as it may be.

Now then, as we agreed, full payment will be made to fulfill the 60 days remaining on your column contract, though we will discontinue publishing it now, As for the change in pay - - the loss of column money - - there, unfortunately, can be no increase in your base pay at present.”¹⁴³

Higgins fought for reinstatement, lobbied Ogden Reid, the newspaper’s president, to have Bellows’ decision reversed, and even asked friends General Lucius Clay and Senator Kenneth Keating to write Bellows on her behalf.¹⁴⁴ (Clay did write Bellows on July 23, 1963.¹⁴⁵)

The cancellation reduced Higgins’ income because the *Herald Tribune*’s payment for her column was separate from her regular salary. However, the real problem Higgins found in the cancellation was that she saw her place in the newspaper business as a columnist, and believed that a credible columnist in Washington had to have a regular position on an editorial page.¹⁴⁶ She could have continued to cover international stories from the newspaper’s Washington bureau, but

¹⁴³ Jim Bellows, "Memorandum to Marguerite Higgins," May 28, 1963, Box 2, Correspondence B, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁴⁴ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to General Lucius D. Clay," May 28, 1963, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁴⁵ General Lucius D. Clay, "Letter to Jim Bellows," July 23, 1963, Box 2, Correspondence C, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

this apparently was not enough for Higgins. And money apparently wasn't the issue either, because Higgins even offered to supply her column "free of charge" to be inserted "under-the-cartoon piece each Saturday."¹⁴⁷ Bellows turned her down. Since the newspaper retained Higgins as a reporter, even though it cancelled her column, and in view of the fact that the cancellation was not for financial reasons; it appears that her column indeed was cancelled for the reason that Bellows gave to Higgins, that of space on the editorial page.

On September 26, 1963 Higgins received a letter from William J. Woestendick, editorial director of *Newsday*, offering her a job.¹⁴⁸ He gave her a contract that included a five thousand dollar travel allowance that would enable her to travel domestically and internationally to write a column that *Newsday* would syndicate.¹⁴⁹ Part of her agreement with *Newsday* was that it would get her column placed on the editorial page of the *Washington Evening Star*.¹⁵⁰ The prospect of regaining publication of her column was what drew Higgins to accept Woestendick's offer. After joining *Newsday*, Higgins wrote Jock Whitney, owner of the *Herald Tribune* and explained that the loss of her column was the reason she resigned from the newspaper.

¹⁴⁷ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Jock Whitney," January 30, 1964, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁴⁸ William J. Woestendick, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," September 26, 1963, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁴⁹ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to William J. Woestendick," December 2, 1963, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁵⁰ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Captain Harry F. Guggenheim," December 4, 1964, Box 2, Correspondence G, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

“I left the *Herald Tribune* solely because Jim Bellows cancelled my Monday column, and refused to let me write under the cartoon on the editorial page even on Saturdays.

If Jim should ever find that circumstances have changed, and that he would like to have my column in the *Herald Tribune*, I should be interested in hearing from him.”¹⁵¹

The first year of Higgins’ employment by *Newsday* was turbulent on two fronts. Several months after Higgins began her new job, Woestendick wrote to her that she was not meeting the copy deadlines for her column and that she was traveling without authority.¹⁵² Woestendick’s letter started an exchange of correspondence that almost caused Higgins to resign. Higgins responded that she wanted to write “close to the news,” which sometimes caused her to submit her stories beyond syndication deadlines.¹⁵³ Regarding travel authority, *Newsday* editors said that even though they had given Higgins a travel allowance, the company wanted to control where she went because they didn’t want to pay for her to travel where they already had a reporter.¹⁵⁴ Higgins responded with an explanation that columnists and reporters don’t write about the same things. This travel restriction was unacceptable to Higgins and she threatened to dissolve their agreement unless *Newsday* backed off.¹⁵⁵ While Higgins

¹⁵¹ Higgins, "Letter to Jock Whitney."

¹⁵² William J. Woestendick, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," February 12, 1964, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁵³ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to William J. Woestendick," February 13, 1964, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to William J. Woestendick," February 25, 1964, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

resolved these issues with her employer,¹⁵⁶ *Newsday* was unable to deliver on its commitment to place her column in Washington. Higgins viewed this lapse as an indicator of her personal status as a journalist. She wrote that not being published in Washington “makes me wonder whether I should stay in the newspaper business.”¹⁵⁷

Death.

While at *Newsday*, Higgins continued to travel to Vietnam to cover the fighting. On October 5, 1965 Higgins was in Washington recovering from her last trip overseas. She received an invitation from Dick Fogel of the *Oakland Tribune* to attend an event with “all the top columnists” in California on October 14th.¹⁵⁸ Higgins responded through a cable sent to Tom Dorsey, director of *Newsday* specials, at the newspaper’s Long Island office, declining the invitation because she was ill. “It’s not that I’m unwilling,” Higgins wrote. “Just weak.”¹⁵⁹ On October 25th Higgins wrote Dorsey again, saying that “the effects of this Dengue fever . . . are still with me.”¹⁶⁰

Time magazine’s Jean Franklin, in a draft of Higgins’ obituary she wrote just over two months later, described the last days of Higgins’ life:

¹⁵⁶ William J. Woestendick, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," February 20, 1964, Box 2, Correspondence W, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁵⁷ Higgins, "Letter to Captain Harry F. Guggenheim."

¹⁵⁸ Secretary to Marguerite Higgins, "Note from Secretary," October 5, 1965, Box 2, Correspondence Misc., Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁵⁹ Marguerite Higgins, "Cable to Tom Dorsey," October 5, 1965, Box 2, Correspondence D, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁶⁰ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Tom Dorsey," October 25, 1965, Box 2, Correspondence D, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

“Maggie Higgins came back from her last trip abroad with a raging fever . . . flaring as high as 105 degrees. Then on November 3, her white blood count [went] down alarmingly, she entered Walter Reed Army Hospital.

At the beginning the doctors suspected . . . drug-resistant malaria . . . [or] the tropical disease Leishmaniasis. Some of her symptoms seemed to fit either . . . Her lungs were badly involved as well at the time she entered the hospital . . . but no parasite . . . could be isolated . . .

Maggie’s condition worsened. Uremic poisoning developed and she was put on dialysis from time to time. She began hemorrhaging internally, once so severely that her life hung in the balance.

. . . several weeks before Christmas they finally isolated the Leishmaniasis protozoa from Maggie’s bone marrow. ‘That seemed very hopeful,’ a friend recalls.

But the drugs that produce such a dramatic response in most cases of this Asian disease apparently didn’t work on Maggie. . . .

Shortly before Christmas her condition seemed to improve. The pain subsided and some of her kidney function returned. Maggie felt well enough to fret about how she could get home for several hours on Christmas day to see the kids.

Suddenly, unaccountably, she took a turn for the worse. Her kidney function relapsed, the blood dyscrasia returned; all her systems seemed to go bad. By last Sunday all hope had been lost.”¹⁶¹

Higgins died on Monday, January 3, 1966. She was forty-five years old.

A lifetime of achievement.

Beginning early in her career, Higgins established a distinguished record of journalistic accomplishments. *Herald Tribune* executive Helen Rogers Reid, rewriter M.C. Blackman and others at the newspaper noted Higgins’ coverage of the 1944 Hartford Circus fire, one of the biggest regional stories that occurred during her two years on the city desk before being given an overseas assignment.¹⁶²

Covering the end of World War II in Europe, Higgins brought the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps to the front pages of her newspaper. She wrote a vivid and

¹⁶¹ Franklin, "Marguerite Higgins Obit I, Draft."

¹⁶² Blackman, "Rewrite Man."; Reid, "Remarks Introducing Marguerite Higgins at *Herald Tribune* Forum."

moving description of German citizens of Weimar being forced to view the “vast arena of sadism and mass murder” at the nearby Buchenwald camp.¹⁶³ Two weeks later, Higgins was one of the first Americans to reach the Dachau concentration camp. In her autobiography, Higgins described how she and Peter Furst, correspondent for *Stars and Strips*, entered the prison compound. When Higgins realized that the remaining German guards had their machine gun pointed at her, she ordered them to come and surrender, which they did.¹⁶⁴ In her dispatch to the newspaper, Higgins described the reaction of the “tattered, emaciated” prisoners to their liberation.¹⁶⁵ The army awarded Higgins the “campaign ribbon for outstanding service with the armed forces under difficult conditions” for her actions at Dachau.¹⁶⁶ For the story she wrote about the liberation of the prisoners there, Higgins received the New York Newspaper Women’s Club award for the best foreign correspondence of 1945.¹⁶⁷

Following the war, Higgins turned her attention to the communist methods of control in Czechoslovakia and Poland, covered the trials of German war criminals at Nuremberg, and, as bureau chief in Berlin, she wrote page-one stories during the eleven-month Allied airlift of supplies to the Western sector of the city.

¹⁶³ Higgins, "Army Forces Weimar Citizens to View Buchenwald's Horror." *New York Herald Tribune*, p.1

¹⁶⁴ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.91.

¹⁶⁵ Marguerite Higgins, "33,000 Dachau Captives Freed by 7th Army," *New York Herald Tribune*, May 1, 1943, 1.

¹⁶⁶ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.95.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Higgins drew on all this experience when she covered the Korean War, and wrote stories that revealed the difficult situation facing American and South Korean troops. Before she was able to get to Korea from Tokyo following the invasion, Higgins reported that one year earlier the United States had given the South Korean government military equipment and supplies valued at \$70 million. However, much of this had been ruined because it had not been stored properly during the winter. Thus, when the attack began the South Korean army did not have enough guns for its soldiers or enough ammunition for the guns it did have.¹⁶⁸ Higgins reported on the lack of preparedness of the South Korean army when she wrote about the retreat of the American military advisors and South Korean troops from Seoul, noting that the South Korean troops had panicked and broken ranks as they fled into the countryside.¹⁶⁹ After U.S. forces joined the war, Higgins reported an air attack on these troops, who were digging in at the front lines, by jet fighters that was thought to have been American.¹⁷⁰ She wrote about U.S. troops complaining about the impossible situations they had been put in, and of their inadequate bazooka anti-tank weapons whose rockets bounced off the Soviet-made tanks used by the North Koreans.¹⁷¹ Higgins quoted the pleas of the outnumbered U.S. soldiers who were facing possible death because of inferior firepower. "Why don't you tell them [the

¹⁶⁸ Marguerite Higgins, "How the Rival Armies Stack Up: South Koreans Lack Equipment," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 26, 1950, 1.

¹⁶⁹ Marguerite Higgins, "MacArthur's Tour of War Front End Panic, Stiffens Defense," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 30, 1950, 1.

¹⁷⁰ Marguerite Higgins, "U.S. Troops Attacked by Planes, Maybe by an Ally or Americans," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 4, 1950, 1.

¹⁷¹ Marguerite Higgins, "Retreat from Chonan: Encircled G.I.S Battle against Bitter Odds," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 9, 1950, 1.

officials back in America] how useless it is,” asked one army lieutenant. The officer added, “Why don’t they send over something we can really fight a war against the [North] Koreans with?”¹⁷² For these reports and her stories about the battles themselves, Higgins received the Pulitzer Prize for her coverage of the Korean War.

With dispatches that provided an unvarnished view of the conditions the American troops faced and their attitudes about the lack of support they were being given, Higgins played an important role in the controversy about censorship of the press in Korea. At the beginning of the war the correspondents were operating under a voluntary system of censorship in which the military responded with harsh penalty if dispatches were thought to have given aid and comfort to the enemy. For example, United Press correspondents Peter Kalisher and Tom Lambert were ordered to leave Korea because of stories they filed (both were allowed to return). Because of this uncertainty and the retribution that might result, the correspondents requested that the military introduce official censorship.¹⁷³ These controls finally were put into place in late December, almost six months following the invasion by North Korea.¹⁷⁴

Higgins provided almost daily reports from Korea during the first six months of the conflict. One of her stories, “9 Trapped GIs Stand Off Waves of Reds in 10-Hour Onslaught,” was included by Bryce Rucker among eight war dispatches he selected for his book, *Twentieth Century Reporting at Its Best*.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Marguerite Higgins, "Reds Slip Behind G.I.S at Night, Then Attack to Sound of Bugle.," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 13, 1950, 1.

¹⁷³ Knightley, *The First Casualty*, p.337.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.345.

¹⁷⁵ Bryce W. Rucker, *Twentieth Century Reporting at Its Best* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1964), p.124.

In October 1951, Higgins returned to Korea to report on the truce talks between North Korea and the United Nations forces, which had resumed after being broken off the previous August 23rd.¹⁷⁶ General Matthew Ridgway, who was commander of United Nations forces in Korea at that time, had put a system in place in which the officials conducting the negotiations for the Allies were not allowed to speak with reporters. Further, Ridgway had undermined the value of daily briefings by assigning them to be given by an officer who had not attended the talks. Fear of reprisals had kept the correspondents assigned to cover the truce talks from writing about news blackout. As she had so often in her career, Higgins broke this story in a dispatch to the *Herald Tribune*. Her act led to a greater number of complaints about the press system, and resulted in a press conference later in October in which Ridgway gave an accounting of what was taking place in the talks.¹⁷⁷

Because of her accomplishments in Korea and the celebrity she achieved, in the early 1950s Higgins found that she had access to world leaders to a greater degree than most other journalists. While Higgins acknowledged that this access might have been due to curiosity on the part of these leaders, most of whom were men, about a woman war correspondent, she also said it resulted from assistance by American officials who felt that her work in Korea qualified her to interview world leaders.¹⁷⁸ Higgins began visiting world leaders in 1951, and this type of interview became a staple of her work in journalism throughout her career.

¹⁷⁶ Stone, *The Hidden History of the Korean War*, p.310.

¹⁷⁷ A. H. Eagly and A. Mladinic, "Are People Prejudiced against Women? Some Answers from Research on Attitudes, Gender Stereotypes, and Judgments of Competence," in *European Review of Social Psychology*, ed. W. & Hewstone Stroebe, M. (New York: Wiley, 1994), pp.316-18.

¹⁷⁸ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.251.

Another area of Higgins' achievements was her coverage of Russia that resulted from the interest she developed in communism following World War II. It must be reemphasized that Higgins was the first journalist to receive a visa to Russia following the relaxation of Stalin-era restrictions, and that in 1955 she was able to reopen the *Herald Tribune's* Moscow office that had been closed since 1948.

In addition to the Pulitzer Prize and New York Newspaper Women's Club award noted previously, Higgins received over fifty other professional awards and distinctions. Military organizations honored her with the Veterans of Foreign Wars gold medal and the Marine Corps Reserve Officers Award.

Research in the Julia Edwards Papers archival collection uncovered evidence of the success that Higgins achieved in her life that was of a different kind than the Pulitzer prize and other journalism awards, the page-one bylines or youthful promotion to bureau chief. The high regard in which her peers held Higgins' professional achievements was demonstrated in a poll of alumni of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism which was conducted in May 1988, over twenty years following her death. The poll was conducted in conjunction with a conference held to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the graduate school. Graduates were asked to identify journalists they particularly admired at the time they entered the School of Journalism (regardless of whether or not the admired journalist attended the school themselves). The report of the results of the "Questionnaire on excellence and the future" listed eighteen journalists. Higgins was the only woman named.¹⁷⁹ She was ranked along with journalism stars like Edward

¹⁷⁹ Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, "Research Report," May 1988, Box 1, Folder 6, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

R. Morrow, James Reston, Walter Lippman, Walter Cronkite, Dan Rather, and Bob Woodward.

Historical legacy.

Much of what was written about Higgins, as summarized in the literature review in chapter two, was anecdotal incidents or summary statements of her professional career. Some of this material, however, also focused on allegations regarding the morals and ethics of her behavior and criticisms of her character. The biography of Higgins presented in chapters four and five primarily was based on material from Higgins' books and documents found in Higgins' archive collection and other collections that included material on her. Like the literature review, the life history includes events that describe her career as well as allegations regarding her behavior and character. A qualitative analysis of this material was completed by the author to develop the following summary statements that describe Higgins' historical legacy.

Statements describing Higgins' professional career:

- Higgins confronted the institutional and personal discrimination that she faced during her career.
- Higgins' competitive nature contributed to her success.
- Higgins' feminine charm contributed to her success.
- Higgins was an energetic and courageous journalist.
- Higgins took physical risks to get news stories.
- Higgins was a resourceful reporter who went to the core source for a story.

- Higgins was conscientious in cultivating and maintaining relationships with important news sources.

Statements describing allegations regarding Higgins' behavior and character:

- Higgins was extremely ambitious, aggressive, competitive, ruthless and manipulative.
- Higgins broke rules.
- Higgins was not liked by her colleagues.
- Higgins was a sexually liberated woman, and that offended some of her peers.
- Higgins stole stories from other reporters and filed them as her own.
- Higgins used sex to gain information from news sources.
- Professional and / or personal behavior by Higgins in Berlin was unacceptable to the editors and her management at the *Herald Tribune*, resulting in her transfer to Tokyo.

CHAPTER 6. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Author credentials and bias.

The review of literature showed that three authors had substantial influence on Higgins' written historical legacy, Antoinette May, who wrote the only biography of Higgins, *Witness to War*; Richard Kluger, who wrote *The Paper*; and Julia Edwards, who wrote *Women of the World*.

While each of these three books has been an important influence on Higgins' written legacy, the analysis showed that May's book likely had the greatest impact. This study not only showed that a number of authors cited May's book directly, but that *Witness to War* influenced the works of Kluger and Edwards, whose books were cited by still more authors. One question in this study is whether May's book met the standards that would have been expected by the scholars and other authors who quoted from it. In a review published in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Bernice Buresh observed that May's book did "nothing but repeat old clichés . . . that will titillate readers of popular magazines . . . [and] sadden anyone who cares about journalism and the struggle of women to be a serious part of that endeavor." May made "feeble attempts to explain Higgins' personality," Buresh observed. "May applies Freudian psychology only to get it hopelessly wrong . . ." ¹

Beaufort Books, the publisher of *Witness to War*, printed the claim on the book's dust jacket that May wrote "a weekly column for the *San Francisco*

¹ Buresh, "Maggie, Gal Reporter." *Columbia Journalism Review*, pp.55-6.

Chronicle,”² thereby establishing a credential for the author. The publisher was implying that the author of this biography of a news correspondent was a journalist who had an important position with a major newspaper. Research conducted for this study has revealed that the only column that May ever wrote for the *San Francisco Chronicle* was an astrological advice column penned under the name “Minerva.”³ May did write two other biographies of women, however; one was about the life of native-American rights activist and author Helen Hunt Jackson,⁴ and the subject of the second was Alma Reed, “sob sister” journalist for the *San Francisco Call* in the late 1800s.⁵ The bulk of May’s writing has been in two subject areas not related to journalism or women’s history. May has written several books on psychic and paranormal phenomena, a topic more closely related to the author’s expertise in astrological advice than to her interest in biographies of women.⁶ Most of May’s writing activity, both in books and periodicals, appears to be on the subject of travel.⁷ Given the important role May’s book has played in shaping the written legacy of Higgins, this insight into the lack of the author’s credentials is important.

While May conducted original research by interviewing contemporaries of Higgins, *Witness to War* is not an academic book. References are not annotated, and,

² May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*. See dust jacket.

³ Antoinette May, "Email Correspondence with Author," (Palo Alto: September 25, 2003).

⁴ Antoinette May, *Helen Hunt Jackson: A Lonely Voice of Conscience* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1987).

⁵ Antoinette May, *Passionate Pilgrim* (New York: Beaufort Books, 1993).

⁶ Antoinette May, *Adventures of a Psychic: A Fascinating Inspiring True-Life Story of One of America's Most Successful Clairvoyants* (Carlsbad: Hay House, 1998); Antoinette May, *Haunted Houses of California* (San Carlos: World Wide Publishing, 1994).

⁷ Antoinette May, www.Antoinettemay.com (2003).

as has been stated elsewhere in this study and was pointed out in the book's review in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, it appears to have been written as a popular book because it created a sensationalized version of Higgins' life.

Richard Kluger devoted five pages to Higgins in his book, *The Paper*, and made reference to her on ten others. Because Kluger's book was such a complete and well-researched history of the newspaper at which Higgins spent all but the last three years of her career, his brief portrayal of her played an important part in her written historical legacy.

Kluger began his career in journalism at *The Wall Street Journal* and was a writer for *Forbes* magazine and then the *New York Post* before becoming literary editor of the New York *Herald Tribune*. He served as executive editor at Simon and Schuster and editor in chief at Atheneum. Prior to publication of *The Paper*, Kluger wrote five novels and a non-fiction book, *Social Justice*, about school desegregation.

Kluger's treatment of Higgins was an attack launched on two fronts. First, he described her as an extremely aggressive person who was not constrained by morals or ethics. In the paragraph in which Kluger introduced Higgins in his book, he wrote that she "was a driven and at times ferociously determined woman who did not play by the rules to get what she wanted."⁸ Second, Kluger repeatedly linked Higgins' success to her sexual behavior. He attempted to place sexual conduct at the core of her character, and suggested that her use of sex in her career was the cause of "love, hate, admiration, envy, and intense resentment" toward her by her colleagues.⁹

⁸ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.440.

⁹ Ibid.

Kluger expanded on this theme in his second paragraph on Higgins, in which he observed:

“Her problem stemmed in large measure from her beauty. A five-foot-eight windblown blonde, possessed of a round, babyish face and a high-pitched voice that gave her the look and sound of a teenager well into her twenties, Higgins also had a voluptuously curved, and unmistakably adult body that, by all accounts, proved useful in the advancement of her career.”¹⁰

Kay Mills, in her book, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Page*, wrote, “Kluger [in *The Paper*] spent more time discussing Higgins’ sexual activities than he spent on the news-reporting of many *Herald-Trib* staff members.”¹¹ Kluger’s initial focus on Higgins’ sexual behavior was at the time she joined the *Herald Tribune*. He discussed her lovers and quoted them, writing, for example, “‘We all broke her in, some in more ways than one,’ remarked an accomplished reporter who said he had been on sexually intimate terms with her.”¹² Kluger described Higgins’ sex life as an object of general discussion at the newspaper.

“Office-watchers were divided over whether she was intimate with more than one man at a time or took them up and discarded them *seriatim*. It all would have been nobody’s business except for one thing: a substantial body of evidence suggests that throughout her working life Maggie Higgins selected most if not all of her bedmates for intensely practical reasons.”¹³

Kluger’s negative attitude toward Higgins was reflected in the following sentence he wrote to describe her at the time the Korean War began: “Maggie Higgins was twenty-nine, obviously unsuited to battlefield conditions, untested under gunfire,

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Mills, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Page*, p.327.

¹² Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.440.

¹³ Ibid.

and a known troublemaker.”¹⁴ This statement is not supported by facts that Kluger knew when he wrote it. As for her being unsuited and untested, Higgins had covered the end of World War II and even had been fired on by Russian soldiers in Berlin. Kluger’s statement that she was a troublemaker is based on allegations he quoted in the book by reporter Steven White that were made at a time when White likely had other motives for criticizing Higgins.¹⁵

Research in the archived material that Kluger used to develop his book, *The Paper*, found evidence that he was less than objective in the approach he took to writing about Higgins. For example, in the original handwritten notes of his interview of *Herald Tribune* reporter Carl Levin, Kluger wrote down Levin’s reference to Higgins “using men, herself to get whatever she wanted.” The next line of these notes included Levin’s mention of “a general, behind gates.” In his typewritten summary of the original notes from the interview, Kluger expanded Levin’s allegation, broadening the language to suggest a pattern of behavior. “‘It was apparent that she was using men to get what she wanted,’” Kluger quoted Levin as saying. He then wrote, “also herself [=her body] // consorting and sleeping with *generals* [italics mine] behind castle gates in Germany.”¹⁶ It is possible that in the interview Levin was not citing a pattern of behavior, but making reference to an unspecified general or to General William Hall, whom Higgins met in Berlin, began her relationship with him there and later married. In the final version of his copy for *The Paper*, Kluger expanded his revision of the Levin quote even further. “Her

¹⁴ Ibid., p.443.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.442.

¹⁶ Levin, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

notoriety grew with her continued practice of taking useful lovers,” Kluger wrote, “among them . . . an ample selection of ranking American Army officers – preferably the kind with stars on their shoulders – in liaisons behind sturdy castle gates.”¹⁷

Kluger transformed a singular reference into the allegation that Higgins had a pattern of behavior that perhaps was immoral and unethical.

Another story that Levin told Kluger was that Higgins asked him if she could go along on an interview he had scheduled with the French president. In his handwritten interview notes, Kluger wrote that Levin said, “Maggie back in town, heard I had appointment to interview president of France: ‘Carl, your French isn’t that good, wouldn’t you like me to come along and help?’” Kluger made an interpretation of this incident when he wrote in his book that Higgins’ request was an example of her “manipulativeness.”¹⁸ First, Kluger described the request with a pejorative term when he wrote that Higgins “purred” her question to Levin, a word not used by Levin in his interview.¹⁹ Second, Kluger ignored the face validity of the value of having a reporter who spoke French at this interview. Third, Kluger used this incident to support a more serious point by linking it with another quote from Levin that Higgins “had a way of grabbing the main story on shared assignments,”²⁰ implying that Higgins’ intention was to steal the interview story from Levin. The interview notes show that Levin made no such allegation. Kluger’s motivation for the way he wrote

¹⁷ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.441.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

this incident is seen in a comment he made to himself on notes of his interview with Levin. Kluger wrote a reminder to “Add Maggie story to show how she operated.”²¹

Kluger’s archival files also revealed that he made up his mind very early in his research about the extent of Higgins’ sexual behavior. In a 1982 interview with Kluger, Kenneth McCormick, former editor-in-chief of Doubleday & Company, referred to the relationship Higgins had with New York *Herald Tribune* executive Bill Robinson. McCormick said, “Robinson was ‘great friends’ with Maggie, though he doubts sexual motives.” Kluger added a personal comment, “I don’t,” in his interview notes, reflecting the opinion he had come to.²² This was four years before he completed his research and published his book.

Another possible example in Kluger’s files of the bias that he brought to his writing about Higgins was revealed by comments he inserted next to a photograph of her. The photograph appeared in an article about Higgins in *Time* magazine.²³ The photograph was provided to *Time* by the New York *Herald Tribune*. In this close-up picture of Higgins, her head was tilted down and she was looking away from the camera. This unusual pose suggests that the picture may have been cropped from a larger photograph. Next to the photograph, Kluger wrote, “sad, innocent, pretty, big-

²¹ Marguerite Higgins, "Letters with Attorneys Regarding Carl Levin Legal Action," April 1965, Box 8, Legal, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.441.

²² Kenneth McCormick, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 11, Folder 257, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

²³ "The Press: Drawing the Line." *Time*, p. 36.

eyed.”²⁴ Kluger’s archival material contained many photographs of Higgins. The fact that he chose to make these observations suggest that this particular picture may have reinforced his attitude about Higgins. While Kluger’s handwritten comment can be interpreted in several ways, his inclusion of the word “innocent,” when it is known from other material that he believed Higgins was anything but innocent, suggests that he felt she was projecting sad innocence to the camera, possibly confirming the opinion he expressed in *The Paper* that she was manipulative.

Kluger trivialized Higgins’ work as a serious journalist in Korea by making reference to alleged quarrels with reporter Keyes Beech over when to leave the field to file stories, noting that Higgins’ deadline was later than his; and suggesting that Beech faced difficulties in working with Higgins – a woman – because he had to accommodate her needs related to her menstrual period.

In the “Notes on sources” for the chapter in which Kluger devoted the five pages to Higgins, he mentioned five books in addition to those written by Higgins. One of the books was May’s *Witness to War*.²⁵ Kluger’s use of May’s material was reflected in the fact that his file on Higgins in his archives contained copies of two reviews of May’s book. The review that appeared in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, mentioned above, was extremely critical of May.²⁶ This review was in the file without notes or comment by Kluger. The second review, “A woman in combat,” appeared in the *Washington Journalism Review*. The reviewer, Anne Chamberlin, did

²⁴ Richard Kluger, "Marguerite Higgins Research," Box 6, Folder 122, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

²⁵ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.762.

²⁶ Buresh, "Maggie, Gal Reporter." *Columbia Journalism Review*, pp.55-6.

not question or criticize May's research or analysis, and repeated in her article the accusations made about Higgins in *Witness to War*. Higgins was "disliked," "not to be trusted," "ruthless," "her exploits were more dazzling than her copy," and "without a real war to cover her star went in decline." Kluger put an underline beneath each of these points on his copy of the book review. The fact that Kluger ignored a review that was critical to the book and underlined passages in an interview that was critical of Higgins is another example of the approach he took to writing about Higgins.²⁷

As a journalist and former staff member of the *Herald Tribune*, Kluger was aware of Higgins' accomplishments, but chose to ignore or diminish them. In discussion of reports of the lack of equipment and training of U.S. forces, Kluger quoted Homer Bigart, not Higgins, who, as noted above, was credited for stories that brought this issue to light.²⁸ Writing about the quality of coverage of the fighting in Korea, Kluger cited Bigart's piece, "From a Foxhole in Korea,"²⁹ but did not mention work by Higgins, such as her story, "9 Trapped GIs Stand Off Waves of Reds in 10-Hour Onslaught," that was noted earlier. Indeed, of all Higgins' accomplishments and the awards accorded her as noted above, Kluger only mentioned the Pulitzer Prize, noting that she shared it with other correspondents.

Julia Edwards, born one month later than Higgins, was her classmate at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. During her journalism career she covered the war in Korea for a brief time, but arrived there after Higgins had

²⁷ Kluger, "Marguerite Higgins Research."

²⁸ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.445.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.444.

completed her tour. However, all similarity between the two women ends there. Research for this study found a number of documents in Edwards' archival collection that suggested she led an unhappy and unrewarding life. She wrote a brief autobiographical sketch that is brooding, angry and full of self-pity.³⁰ Her employment records showed a scattered history of unfocused work.³¹ She kept a file of letters she received in which her proposals for articles and books and inquiries for jobs were rejected.³² Edwards worked for short periods of time as a reporter for a number of newspapers and news organizations. These included the *Baltimore Sun*, *Chicago Daily News*, *Stars and Stripes*, *the Washington Star*, Washington Reporters, Inc., United Press International, Worldwide Press Service, the United States Information Agency, and others.³³ In 1967, Edwards self-published her only other book, *The Occupiers*, through an agreement in which she paid a fee to Fleet Publishing.³⁴

She blamed at least some of her problems on being a woman in a man's world. "If you are no beauty queen and you don't claim to be smarter than men and you refuse to confine yourself to the housewife market," Edwards wrote, "there is just

³⁰ Julia Edwards, "The Many Faces of the Truth, an Autobiography by Julia Edwards," Undated, Box 1, Folder 23, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

³¹ Julia Edwards, "Career Summary," Undated, Box 1, Folder 1, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

³² Julia Edwards, "Proposals and Job Applications," January 12, 1969, Box 3, Folder 10, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

³³ Edwards, "Career Summary."

³⁴ Julia Edwards, "Letter to Fleet Publishing," October 10, 1967, Box 3, Folder 15, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

one way to make in a man's world – to be pushy, abrasive, officious, if necessary.”³⁵

Edwards summed up her anger when she wrote, “I never realized the pent-up animosity within me until I was challenged to write my memoirs.”³⁶

In 1976 Edwards suggested that because they had been classmates at Columbia she had been fond of Higgins, writing that she had been “hurt” personally by Higgins’ death ten years earlier.³⁷ In her book, Edwards was not so kind. The title of the chapter she devoted to Higgins was “The Outrageous Marguerite Higgins.”³⁸ In a book intended to fill in “major gaps both in the history of women and the history of journalism,”³⁹ the adjective “outrageous” indicates that Edwards felt that Higgins should be remembered more for her exploits than her professional work. Not unlike the psychological analysis for which May was criticized by Buresh, Edwards said that in high school Higgins struggled “with a sense of inferiority to her wealthy classmates.”⁴⁰ Edwards used this insight into Higgins’ psyche to explain her liberated sexual attitudes. “She fit the pattern of the young woman so insecure she doubted men would care for her,” Edwards wrote, “unless she gave them sex.”⁴¹

³⁵ Julia Edwards, "Letter to David Susskind," January 12, 1969, Box 3, Folder 10, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

³⁶ Edwards, "The Many Faces of the Truth, an Autobiography by Julia Edwards."

³⁷ Julia Edwards, "Letter to Donna Schmadel," October 19, 1976, Box 3, Folder 14, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

³⁸ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, p.181.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.191.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.196.

Edwards cited the books by May and Kluger as sources for her chapter on Higgins. Both of these books quoted the allegations that Steven White made about Higgins' professional conduct in Berlin and his claim that she was relieved of her duties and transferred to Tokyo because of her behavior. Edwards included White's story in her book. "Her editors nevertheless concluded that Higgins was overintense, overeager, and incapable of getting along with fellow reporters," Edwards wrote. "Over her protests, they delivered the injunction: go to Tokyo or quit."⁴² Edwards then gave the alleged episode a new twist that added another negative dimension to Higgins' historical legacy. Edwards wrote that these events dishonored Higgins' professional reputation in 1950. "Marguerite Higgins ... arrived in Japan in *disgrace* [italics mine]," Edwards wrote. "For antagonizing fellow *Herald Tribune* correspondents as well as the opposition, she was *demoted* [italics mine] from the chief of the paper's Berlin bureau to correspondent in Tokyo..."⁴³ Edwards embellished another aspect of White's allegations as well. White was the only source found in the archives who accused Higgins of hyping her stories. Kluger quotes White as saying Higgins "was annoyed because I would never hype a story."⁴⁴ Edwards implied that this complaint about Higgins was more broadly made when she wrote, "*Men* [italics mine] accused her of hyping her stories beyond their importance to make page one, then having the gall to criticize them for not exaggerating."⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p.189.

⁴⁴ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.442.

⁴⁵ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, p.195.

Edward's comment above that she had been "fond" of Higgins was not reflected in her memory of their days together as graduate students studying journalism. Edwards remembered that when they were classmates at Columbia, Higgins was "cold toward women students."⁴⁶ Research found a more revealing insight into Edward's opinion about Higgins in a letter in her archives written to a friend after her book was published. "I rejected the idea of starting [photograph at the front of the book] with Marguerite Higgins," Edwards wrote, "because she was everything men hate about women correspondents."⁴⁷

Allegations about Higgins' behavior by her colleagues.

The literature review and biography of Higgins included a number of allegations that were made about her personal character and professional behavior. In this section of the findings, information obtained through archival research offers new perspectives on criticism of Higgins that falls into several categories.

One issue relevant to this analysis is the degree to which an event that happened many years earlier can be transformed over time to include different 'facts' and project different meaning. For example, correspondent Toni Howard told Julia Edwards in an interview how a simple incident involving her uniform was transformed to represent her character in a wholly inaccurate way. The actual story occurred one day when she was in Europe riding in a jeep dressed in uniform, but without the required shoes and stockings. Her driver stopped the jeep when they came across General George Patton riding in his vehicle. Patton knew Howard, and

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.191.

⁴⁷ Julia Edwards, "Letter to Ann Buchwald," April 21, 1980, Box 3, Folder 15, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

asked her to walk over to speak with him. When she emerged from her jeep, the general saw her legs and feet and was amused that she was “out of uniform.” The transformed version of this story, about which Howard said she had been asked throughout her life, paints Howard as being a somewhat outrageous character. In this version General Patton sees her as she is walking down a street with her hair flowing down to her waist (non regulation length), her uniform adorned with an orange necktie, and accompanied by two large Doberman dogs. Seeing this Hollywood-esque vision, Patton then berates Howard for being out of uniform.⁴⁸

Following are the findings related to allegations made about Higgins. These findings sometimes do not support the allegations against Higgins, and, as was the case in Howard’s story about General Patton, reveal truths that are in contrast to the stories that have developed over the years.

- Allegation: The belief that she stole material from other reporters.

Some of the authors who wrote about Higgins stated that people believed she stole news stories from other reporters. The allegations made by the authors were based on information from varied sources: May quoted *Herald Tribune* correspondent Don Cook;⁴⁹ Keeshen quoted journalist Sonia Tomara;⁵⁰ Kluger used material from *Herald Tribune* reporters Carl Levin⁵¹ and Roscoe Drummond;⁵² and Edwards, who was a journalist, made the allegation herself that Higgins took another

⁴⁸ Toni Howard, "Interview by Julia Edwards," 1980s, Box 5, Folder 3, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI. Audio tapes.

⁴⁹ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.189.

⁵⁰ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.109.

⁵¹ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.441.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.515.

reporter's story and filed it as her own.⁵³ The charges made, however, were without specific attribution. Generally, the sources cited by the authors did not identify specific incidents in which Higgins stole stories that they or others knew about first hand.

May tried to give credibility to the charge that Higgins stole stories as a professional journalist by establishing that this was a pattern of behavior that began in college. May quoted, without specific attribution, a student who worked with Higgins on the school newspaper at Berkeley. "I was sitting literally sitting on my notes for fear she'd [Higgins] steal the story. It wouldn't have been the first time."⁵⁴ Primary research for this study uncovered that interviews conducted for a 1999 article about Higgins for the *Daily Californian* Alumni Association newsletter make no reference to stealing stories. Katrina J. Lee, a practicing attorney who worked on the newspaper during her undergraduate years at Berkeley, interviewed two men who were on the staff of the *Daily Californian* with Higgins and remembered her well. Neither man made reference to Higgins stealing stories. In fact, one of these men described Higgins' character as totally opposite from that written about by May. Lee described his memory of her as "contrary to the stories of Higgins as aggressive and maybe even pushy."⁵⁵

One of the findings from archival research, specifically Kluger's interviews of *Herald Tribune* reporters Judith Crist and Francis Sgrue, as well as an interview

⁵³ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, pp.192,95.

⁵⁴ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.42.

⁵⁵ Katrina J. Lee, "She Wrote the War," *The Daily Californian Alumni Association Newsletter*, Winter 1999.

conducted by the author with Crist, uncovered the fact that a belief existed among some of Higgins' colleagues at the *Herald Tribune* that she stole a major story from her fellow reporters early in her career. The incident concerned a fire in the main tent of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus in Hartford, Connecticut on July 6, 1944. One hundred and forty people lost their lives in the fire, and most of them were children. This was a terrible tragedy and a big story, so the *Herald Tribune* wanted lots of coverage. Reporters Charlie Towne, Ted Laymon, Milt Lewis, and Walter Arm were rushed to the scene, as was Higgins. In the years after the fire, stories developed that Higgins used tricks to "steal" the story from the other correspondents. Judith Crist alleged that Higgins behavior was "underhanded:"

"[By] hogging the phone booth while covering the Hartford fire so when Walter Arm and Milt Lewis came with stuff to phone in, she pretended she was protecting the franchise by holding the phone front, yet when she gave her stuff over to the city desk it was as if it was her material."⁵⁶

Reporter Frank Sugrue said, "Ted Laymon had a lot of facts too, but Maggie hogged the phone and called in Ted's stuff as if it were her own."⁵⁷ Editor Alden Whitman had a different version of how Higgins allegedly appropriated work, citing the same story but with Higgins stealing from the competition. "Once she stole a story from [*New York Times* reporter] Meyer Berger – literally," Whitman said:

"... she got up there late, didn't really didn't know how to cover, sources weren't available, deadline tight and no help, so she went to the Western Union operator and said she had to make some fixes in Mr. Berger's copy and could she please see it. [She] cannibalized his copy."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Crist, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

⁵⁷ Sugrue, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

⁵⁸ Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

Archival research found the unpublished memoir of *Herald Tribune* rewriter M.C. “Inky” Blackman that contained evidence that the allegation that Higgins stole the circus fire story was not true. At the *Herald Tribune*’s office in New York, Blackman was on the receiving end of the communication from the reporters in Hartford. In his memoir, Blackman told what actually happened that day - - a story very different from the allegations of stealing.

“Teddy [Laymon] and Higgins ... reached Hartford and got to telephones after ... preliminary checking. I talked to Teddy, who was getting all the available information and comment from the circus, town and state officials. Others on rewrite took voluminous notes from Higgins, who was getting survival and eyewitness accounts of the dreadful event and giving a graphic description of the frantic scenes at the temporary morgue.”

“The story was carried under a two-line banner on the front page and the credit line was an anonymous ‘By a Staff Correspondent.’” “Teddy got a byline, ‘By Theodore Laymon,’ on his second-day follow-up story. Higgins, who had worked until 4 A.M. after they reached the scene, got nothing except some experience and a rare tribute from the State’s Attorney H.M. Alcorn Jr., who asked Teddy in awe: ‘Where’d your paper find that blue-eyed blonde? She’s a holy terror. She nearly drove me nuts with questions raised by survivors she interviewed.’”⁵⁹

Blackman’s version of events was confirmed by an analysis of the *Herald Tribune*’s coverage of the fire, with the exception of the fact that Higgins did receive a byline for an article – but in a story that was given far less prominent treatment than Laymon’s byline report that he referred to. The newspaper’s July 7th edition carried three stories about the Hartford tragedy. The byline on each of these reports read, “By a Staff Correspondent.”⁶⁰ The July 8th edition carried two follow-up stories. Ted Laymon, who had worked as a rewrite man and reporter for the newspaper since the

⁵⁹ Blackman, "Rewrite Man."

⁶⁰ Staff correspondent, "127 Die as Fire Sweeps Circus in Hartford," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 7, 1944, 1; Staff correspondent, "Adults Trample Children, Rush to Escape Fire," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 7, 1944, 1; Staff correspondent, "All Apparatus in Hartford Is Rushed to Fire," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 7, 1944, 3.

late 1930s, wrote a story about the fire under his byline that was carried on page one under the newspaper's main headline that was about the latest events in the war.⁶¹ Higgins, under whose name stories rarely appeared, according to an analysis of editions from weeks prior to the fire, also received a byline in the July 8th edition.⁶² Her story, however, appeared on page nine. These were the only stories about the Hartford fire carried by the *Herald Tribune* under a reporter's byline.

Another indication that the allegation Higgins stole the Hartford circus fire story from Ted Laymon and Milt Lewis is not true is that neither man mentioned the incident during their interviews with Kluger. If the Hartford incident had been such an important transgression by Higgins, it is not unlikely that at least one of them would have included it in their discussion of their early days on the newspaper.⁶³

The Hartford circus fire took place during Higgins' second year on the city desk in New York. It may be that this incident, taking place so early in her career, established a belief about Higgins that she was not to be trusted. It is possible that this incident gave credibility to the charge that stealing stories was a pattern of Higgins' behavior. Thus, the Hartford circus fire incident may be the basis of statements made about Higgins by her colleagues that were quoted in the literature.

⁶¹ Theodore Laymon, "Total Dead in Circus Fire Reaches 148," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 8, 1944, 1.

⁶² Marguerite Higgins, "Hartford Flags at Half Staff for Fire Dead," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 8, 1944, 9.

⁶³ Ted Laymon, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 7, Folder 162, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT; Milton Lewis, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 7, Folder 165, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

As noted earlier in this study, May cited an incident of Higgins allegedly stealing a story in which the source was identified. This was the incident that Jim O'Donnell, correspondent for *Newsweek*, told to May concerning Higgins filing a story based on a document that she read while at his house when she was the bureau chief in Berlin. The document contained a sermon to be given by the Catholic Cardinal in Berlin, denouncing the behavior of Russian occupation troops. This charge by O'Donnell was mitigated by the fact that he had an agreement with Higgins in which they shared information. If Higgins had copied a *story* written by O'Donnell about the sermon and filed it as her own, there would be no question but that she stole the material. In this incident, however, Higgins read a raw document rather than a finished news story. The charge that Higgins stole the story of the sermon cannot be made without knowledge of how Higgins believed the information she saw fit into the agreement under which the two of them had been operating.

May then suggested, however, that there was further evidence that Higgins stole the Cardinal's speech when she pointed out that O'Donnell's wife, Toni Howard, used the incident in her book, *Shriek with Pleasure*. Keyes Beech⁶⁴ and Edwards⁶⁵ both stated that journalists believed that the main character in Howard's book, Carla MacMurphy, was based on Higgins. There are conflicting accounts of whether Howard ever acknowledged that she modeled the character in the book on Higgins. One reason why Howard might not have wanted to deny this is that the alleged association with Higgins generated a lot of interest in and presumably sales of her book. This was confirmed in Keyes Beech's comments about how publication of

⁶⁴ Beech, *Tokyo and Points East*, p.168.

⁶⁵ Howard, "Interview by Julia Edwards."

the book affected the press corps in Tokyo.⁶⁶ What Beech described was the fact that *Shriek with Pleasure* played an important role in establishing what people believed to be true about Higgins at the time, and, since many believed that Howard did indeed base the character on her, it remains as a part of Higgins' written legacy. Therefore, it is important to understand as much as possible about Howard's book as it relates to Higgins' image in general as well as to the charge that she stole O'Donnell's Cardinal speech story in particular.

Archival research in the Julia Edwards Papers found an interview of Howard by Edwards that raised the question of the degree to which Howard's book was based on Higgins. In the interview, Edwards asked Howard, "Is Marguerite Higgins in it [*Shriek with Pleasure*], or is she in it at all?" Howard's response was, "I have been asked that before and I am required to deny it."⁶⁷ This interview took place in the 1980s. Aaron Schildhaus, an intellectual property attorney, noted in a letter to this author that approximately twenty years after the death of Higgins there would have been no reason to deny that the book was based on Higgins' life because you cannot defame the dead. It is not certain whether Howard was familiar with legal aspects of defamation, but this is an issue about which journalists and their publishers have greater than average awareness because they make and write statements about others on a daily basis. For example, in his book, *Late City Edition*, that describes the fundamental "methods, skills and problems involved in the daily editing of a

⁶⁶ Beech, *Tokyo and Points East*, p.168.

⁶⁷ Howard, "Interview by Julia Edwards."

newspaper,”⁶⁸ Joseph Herzberg devoted a separate chapter to libel law.⁶⁹ While Schildhaus acknowledged that there might have been other reasons for Howard to be noncommittal, he suggested that she might have evaded Edward’s question to “protect her own integrity. Imagine if after all that time and the notoriety she gained, if she were to say anything else about a successful book that might cause critics and friends to reevaluate her own honesty to the public and, conceivably, to them.”⁷⁰

Edwards’ interview with Howard revealed an additional point that calls into question whether she had Higgins in mind when she wrote her book. One example from the book might have been taken by some readers to have been modeled on the aspect of Higgins that Keyes Beech described as the fact that she was “very aggressive and tended to walk over people.”⁷¹ In this incident, Carla MacMurphy browbeats a German clerk in a hotel in Frankfurt to give her a suite with a bath, even though the clerk had received orders from the Army not to release the room.⁷²

Edwards had the following exchange in her interview with Howard:

Q - “The first time I ever saw you I was standing behind you at the Park Hotel in Frankfurt ... You were demanding a private bathroom. Your book [*Shriek with Pleasure*] opens with that, and yet everybody says you were describing Marguerite Higgins. Do you remember your lead sentence? You do remember the anecdote about the woman walking up to the desk at the Park Hotel in Frankfurt and demanding a room with a private bathroom.”

A - “I don’t think she did. I think she came to the Park Hotel and bumped into somebody she knew and slept with him.”

⁶⁸ Joseph G. Herzberg, *Late City Edition* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947), p.vii.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.188.

⁷⁰ Aaron Schildhaus, "Email Correspondence with the Author," August 24, 2003, New York.

⁷¹ Beech, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

⁷² Howard, *Shriek with Pleasure*, p.12.

Q - "No. I am asking you if this was not your personal experience."

A - Yes, of course. Whether you write a book, whether you want to or not, you put yourself into it ... your feelings, your interpretations."

Q - "I saw the whole scene. It was you, wasn't it? I want you to admit it."

A - "By admitting that I came into the Park Hotel and asked for a room with a private bath it doesn't make me Carla MacMurphy. In other words, I didn't write myself into this book as the central character. I simply put into the book a very small incident."⁷³

This exchange does not prove that Carla MacMurphy was not based on Higgins, but it does raise the question of how much of the character the author based on herself.

Finally, there is the question of whether feelings that Howard had toward Higgins may have played a role in portraying her in an unflattering light either directly or indirectly. Howard told Edwards that she recently had been interviewed by May for *Witness to War*, the biography of Higgins that she was writing. Howard recalled what she said to May:

"I told her that Marguerite was, as far as I was concerned, a complete bitch. And that she was the most ambitious and ruthless woman that I've ever known. You can quote that too. . . .

What seemed to fire her to this ruthlessness I don't know. She didn't have to sleep with everybody. She could have slept with one in ten or one in five. She didn't have to run over everybody. She didn't have to murder people, break their deadlines. She was simply ruthless."⁷⁴

Howard gave no specifics, however, which was common among those who discredited Higgins.

⁷³ Howard, "Interview by Julia Edwards."

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Since none of the journalists making the specific charge that Higgins stole the Hartford fire story was a direct witness, one assumes these individuals were repeating something they either heard or thought they heard from another party. That charge is contradicted with strong evidence in the memoir written by one who was directly involved in rewriting the story telephoned in from Hartford. Other allegations that Higgins stole stories are vague assertions in that they do not refer to specific events. As Sonia Tomara said, “*I heard* [italics mine] a lot.” These references, however indefinite, indicate that respected journalists both within and outside of the *Herald Tribune* thought it reasonable to believe that Higgins would do such a thing. This raises the question of why they may have thought it reasonable to assume that Higgins stole stories.

One answer to this question may be the degree of intensity with which Higgins pursued her job. Walter Cronkite suggested this in an interview found in the Richard Kluger Papers. Cronkite recalled:

“At bars or after work, most reporters had filed their stories and were relaxing, but Maggie had pursued her work with such singlemindedness that she didn’t quite know how to turn off. She’d drink with the men but there was very little in the way of relaxation ... she’d keep replaying the stories, keep probing for information. You felt there was always the possibility of your being a source for her - not underhandedly but because she was still on”⁷⁵

Another example of how off-hours conversation could be the basis for the perception of a reporter stealing a story was told by correspondent Toni Howard.

“There was that kind of person who was always around press clubs, particularly press club bars, [who] instead of writing his story, talked it. [Example was reporter Betty Knox, who covered the Nuremberg trials for the British Beaverbrook press] She’d sit there and tell all the things she’d done that day and what everybody said and did. And he [referring to reporter Larry Rule] was sitting there at the table and would either consciously or

⁷⁵ Cronkite, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

unconsciously steal material from her ... pick up whatever ... was interesting or useful, [and] slip it into some story, not illegally or not viciously but just because Betty had told [him].”⁷⁶

Higgins’ description of her life as Berlin bureau chief indicates that after hours shoptalk was part of her routine. In her autobiography, Higgins wrote:

“Berlin was a communal existence in the sense that any time any one felt the need for company all he had to do was walk a few blocks to the Press Club, the gathering point for everybody. You saw your friends nearly every day and got to know their troubles and good fortunes as you would those of a member of your own family.”⁷⁷ “During those hectic days and nights the cocktail hour for those of us with morning paper deadlines did not come till 1 A.M., when we would gather at the Press Club ...”⁷⁸

Finally, there was a description by Clinton (Pat) Conger, the United Press manager in Germany at the time of the war crimes trials, which confirmed Higgins pursued her stories in this way. Conger remembered:

“Maggie was circulating amiably each evening chatting with all the other correspondents, wheedling goodies from the reporters who were willing to be helpful because they were not in direct competition with the *Trib*. As a result, she was able to come up with the best and most complete Nuremberg report every day.”⁷⁹

In this context, other journalists could have interpreted the intensity with which Higgins pursued her job as a correspondent as behavior directed toward stealing stories.

- Allegation: The belief that Higgins used sex to get story information.

The allegation that Higgins engaged in sexual relationships with news sources to get information was included in the works of a number of authors who wrote about

⁷⁶ Howard, "Interview by Julia Edwards."

⁷⁷ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.178.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.170.

⁷⁹ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.137.

her. May cited journalists Hal Boyle,⁸⁰ Ann Hunter⁸¹ and Judy Barden⁸² when she wrote about this charge against Higgins. Kluger,⁸³ Edwards,⁸⁴ Sebba⁸⁵ and Sorel⁸⁶ all included the accusation in their books, but they did not make attributions to sources.

The charge that a woman journalist used sex to obtain news stories is not unique to Higgins. *Life* magazine photographer Carl Mydans, who worked with Margaret Bourke-White and Higgins in Europe and Korea, said that, “Tales about both [of these] women professionals ... were legion, with each regularly attacked with charges, usually behind their backs, of having ‘slept her way to the top.’”⁸⁷ Journalist and author Robin Wright has over twenty years extensive experience as a woman working in the male dominated world of war correspondents. Wright has covered nine wars and six revolutions as a correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Sunday Times* of London, CBS News, the *Washington Post* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Wright gave the following account of the charge leveled against her when she was covering the war in Angola for the *Los Angeles Times*

Men also often like to accuse women of using their femininity in exploiting sources of information. For example, I had very good sources among some of the mercenaries who fought in Angola; in a book published

⁸⁰ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.52.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.102.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.118.

⁸³ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.441.

⁸⁴ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, p.196.

⁸⁵ Sebba, *Battling for News: The Rise of the Woman Reporter*, p.187.

⁸⁶ Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War*, p.321.

⁸⁷ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.220.

later I was labeled a ‘mercenary groupie.’ Several men had equal or better sources, but none came in for that kind of condescending description.⁸⁸

Archival research for this study discovered that Kluger had statements from interview sources in his files of material used in the writing of *The Paper* that countered the accusation against Higgins that she used sex to obtain news stories. Foreign correspondent William Shriver, who knew Higgins in Europe, observed in an interview with Kluger that, while Higgins was “a very saucy girl,” he doubted she used sex in her work as a journalist.⁸⁹ Kluger asked *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee, who knew Higgins when she was assigned to the Washington bureau, about her use of sex to get stories. “She got too many stories for that,” Bradlee responded, “no one could have got laid that much [as the stories about her suggested]”⁹⁰ The fact that Kluger did not include these comments in his manuscript, even to provide a little balance to the sexual portrait he painted of Higgins, reflects the bias discussed above that he had about this aspect of her character.

Unlike Kluger, who chose not to introduce statements that tempered the description of Higgins’ sexual behavior, May, in her book *Witness to War*, added two quotes that offset her negative discussion of Higgins. May referred to the fact that Carl Mydans, one of Higgins’ closest friends when they both were in Korea, doubted the charge that Higgins used sex to obtain information because he believed she was

⁸⁸ Robin Wright, "Letter to Julia Edwards," early 1980s, Julia Edwards Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. Madison, WI.

⁸⁹ William Shriver, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 12, Folder 284, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

⁹⁰ Ben Bradlee, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 3, Folder 39, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

committed to General William Hall during the time she was in Berlin and Korea.⁹¹ As noted in the literature review, sexual behavior was an important part of the overall characterization of Higgins that May created. The author's focus on Higgins' promiscuity included discussion of her intimate relationship with Keyes Beech while they were in Korea. If Mydans is correct about Higgins' commitment to Hall when she was in Korea, one must ask what her relationship with Beech reveals about her character. It is possible that Higgins could see nothing moral and ethical wrong in having a sexual relationship with someone she cared about but did not love. On the other hand, Mydans seemed to be making the judgment that, based on what he knew about Higgins and her relationship with Hall, she would view the bartering of her body for news as morally and ethically wrong.

The second reference included by May on the question of Higgins' use of sex was a comment by Colonel John Michaelis, whose military unit in Korea was covered by Higgins. Michaelis made the point that Higgins had to be careful about how she behaved. "People charged her with sleeping around to get her stories but it sure as hell didn't happen in Korea," Michaelis said. "For one thing, she wasn't a fool. General [Walton] Walker was just looking for an excuse to get rid of her. One slip and she would have been out."⁹² Marzolf's quote of Michaelis in her essay about Higgins in the book, *Notable American Women*, reinforces this point, "Maggie didn't need to use her sex to do a good job as a war correspondent."⁹³

⁹¹ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, pp.164-65.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.166.

⁹³ Marzolf, "Marguerite Higgins," p.340.

Two other authors included quotes in their work that contradicted the charge of Higgins' use of sex. Emery included the statement by Keyes Beech that Higgins "didn't deliberately sleep with men to get stories. That's a lot of crap."⁹⁴ In her dissertation, Keeshen quoted NBC radio correspondent John MacVane, who was in Europe covering World War II when Higgins arrived. MacVane said, "As I remember, she never used her sex to further her professional career, something not possible to say about all women correspondents."⁹⁵

The most important fact, however, is that, as was the case with the allegation that Higgins stole stories from other reporters, no incident was found in the research in which it can be proven there was a news story that resulted from a supposed trade of sex for information. True, assertions by Shriver, Michaelis, Mydans, MacVane, and others, that Higgins did not trade sex for news stories, can be challenged on the basis of how well they would have known the intimate details of her life. Some of these men clearly are stating opinions because they could not have known the facts. However, their opinions have some weight because they were working closely with Higgins.

To conclude that Higgins did not use sex to get information from news sources does not mean that she did not use gender to her advantage. As opposed to engaging in sex with a partner, there is evidence that Higgins used beguiling behavior to get information from sources. Walter Cronkite observed that Higgins was "not above using her feminine wiles to get a story, to open up a source" but he saw nothing

⁹⁴ Emery, *On the Front Lines: Following America's Foreign Correspondents across the Twentieth Century*, p.118.

⁹⁵ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.86.

amiss in that.⁹⁶ *Herald Tribune* editor George Cornish concurred that, “Marguerite was often accused of using her feminine wiles ... to get stories, I suspect with some justice.”⁹⁷ Charges that Higgins traded sex for information may have been born in the exaggeration of the simple fact that the attentions of an attractive woman were alluring to male news sources. Keyes Beech thought that this was the case when he said, “Her critics have said that Higgins traded on her sex to get stories that male correspondents could not get. This was partly true. Diplomats and generals had a way of confiding in Higgins that was the despair of her male competitors. General Douglas MacArthur, whose age had not dimmed his eye for a pretty face nor withered his old-fashioned gallantry, was no exception.”⁹⁸

Walter Cronkite also made a unique observation that may suggest that Higgins’ success with male news sources was the result of charm and not seduction. Cronkite noted that Higgins “could look beautiful at times – but didn’t groom herself – she had an absolute lack of interest in it [fancying herself up]. So [he] concluded if Higgins had been that interested in being seductive as [a] way to get her information, she would have been far more conscious of her looks and appearance and groomed herself better.”⁹⁹ From her earliest days at the *Herald Tribune*, Higgins developed a reputation for her lack of personal cleanliness. In the city room, carbon from “books

⁹⁶ Cronkite, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

⁹⁷ Clark, "Interview by K. Keeshen."

⁹⁸ Beech, *Tokyo and Points East*, p.182.

⁹⁹ Cronkite, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

of copy paper got into her hair and smudged her cheeks and forehead.”¹⁰⁰ Her colleagues described Higgins as “literally ink-stained because she rarely washed her face.”¹⁰¹ Foreign correspondent William Shriver said that when foreign editor Joe Barnes came over to Europe in 1944 to check on the correspondents, his first job was “to get Maggie Higgins to wash her face – she wouldn’t wash it from one day to the next.”¹⁰² Television journalist Roger Mudd recalled seeing Higgins twenty years later, and she still was not well groomed. Mudd described Higgins as “unkempt.”¹⁰³

Some journalists who knew Higgins wonder why the question of her sexual relationships with news sources was even discussed. *Herald Tribune* reporter Judith Crist pointed out that a sexual relationship between reporter and source can have more to do with human nature than premeditated behavior. “A lot of times you’re covering a story out of town,” she said, “and there’s a certain [sexuality] in the air. And is it for the news, or because he’s there, or because of power?”¹⁰⁴ But Crist also remembered the gossip that can materialize in newsrooms, whether or not sexual behavior was involved. Referring to her days on the *Herald Tribune* city desk, Crist said, “I’m sure any number of people in the city room thought I must have been banging the editors to get the stories I did.”¹⁰⁵ Crist remembered a specific situation during the Nixon administration involving Washington bureau chief Bert Andrews,

¹⁰⁰ Frank T. Waters, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 15, Folder 336, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁰¹ Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁰² Shriver, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁰³ Roger Mudd, "Letter to the Author.," August 27, 2003, New York NY.

¹⁰⁴ Crist, "Interview by Author."

¹⁰⁵ Crist, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

who was a close friend. “There was no woman in the Washington bureau and he [Andrews] would call me down [from New York] when Pat Nixon was showing the house,” Crist said, “... and I’m sure that 98% of the people thought I was sleeping with Andrews. That’s a natural reflex.”¹⁰⁶

Correspondent Judy Barden, who knew Higgins in Europe, told May that she believed Higgins was very active sexually, but did not understand the criticism.

Barden said:

“If you mention any man who had anything going for him at all, you can be certain that Marguerite had some kind of association with him. But why not? I’ve never understood why people got so annoyed about it. Her relationships, sexual or otherwise, were mutually pleasurable associations. Whose was the advantage?”¹⁰⁷

Barden’s observation raises the question of why, indeed, Higgins’ journalist colleagues made an issue of her sexual behavior. Ann Hunter, of the *Chicago Times*, preferred to focus on Higgins’ success as a journalist. “One had to admire her for what she accomplished,” Hunter said. “Who cares how she lived or who she slept with?”¹⁰⁸

- Allegation: The belief that Higgins was relieved from her bureau chief post in Berlin because of improper personal conduct.

¹⁰⁶ Crist, "Interview by Author."

¹⁰⁷ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.118.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.102.

May,¹⁰⁹ Kluger,¹¹⁰ and Edwards¹¹¹ wrote in their books that in early 1950 the executives of the *Herald Tribune* was so dissatisfied with Higgins' performance in Berlin that they relieved her of responsibilities as bureau chief and transferred her to Tokyo. May and Kluger quoted correspondent Steven White about this incident. They wrote that in the spring of 1948, Steven White, a colleague of Higgins at the *Herald Tribune*, complained to Higgins' boss that her personal and professional conduct in Berlin was alienating news sources and isolating the paper from cooperative relationships with correspondents from other news organizations that were needed to cover all that was going on. May also quoted White's claim that the result of his complaint was that he was successful in getting the *Herald Tribune* to remove Higgins from Berlin.

“It [Higgins' behavior] wasn't necessary. I worked very well with Drew Middleton [Bureau chief of the *New York Times*]. She could have made it much easier for herself and everybody else if she'd done the same, but it just wasn't Maggie's style. She'd always gotten on well with Russ Hill, who now was Paris bureau chief.”¹¹²

None of these authors apparently compared the timing of White's allegations with the date of Higgins' transfer to assess the credibility of his claim. White made his complaint about Higgins to Geoffrey Parsons Jr. sometime during the period when he was working in Berlin as her replacement, from November 11 and December 3,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.125-27.

¹¹⁰ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.442.

¹¹¹ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, p.195.

¹¹² May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.125.

1948.¹¹³ Higgins was not transferred to Tokyo until January 1950, over a year later. If the *Herald Tribune* management accepted White's assertion that Higgins' behavior in Berlin warranted her removal from her position, they certainly would not have waited one year to remedy the situation.

White's interview with and letter to Kluger, in Kluger's archival collection, provided additional information that gives us insights into White's possible motives for his criticism of Higgins. In an interview with Kluger, White said that chief editorial writer Geoffrey Parsons, for whom White worked in New York in 1947, had recommended to *Herald Tribune* management that White himself be fired. Because more coverage was needed overseas, the newspaper's management decided to ship White there instead of letting him go. The European assignment rescued White's job, and he apparently thought he had found an opportunity when he arrived overseas. White told Kluger that when he arrived in Europe, he concluded, "Mostly I think we had pretty inferior foreign correspondents – not that knowledgeable"¹¹⁴ Finding himself in the number two position in Paris and working as a roving correspondent with colleagues he didn't have much respect for, it is possible that White's attack against Higgins was nothing more than an opportunistic attempt to seize a bureau chief's position.

The tone of White's account of this incident suggests that more may have been in play than just his desire to move up the ladder from being a roving correspondent. In a letter to Richard Kluger, White's description of Higgins can be

¹¹³ New York *Herald Tribune*, "Editions from November 11, 1948 to December 3, 1948," Microform, Columbia University Library, New York.

¹¹⁴ White, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

seen as an indictment against a women who dared violate the prescriptive standards of her gender. “Maggie? She was ruthless, mendacious, and pathologically ambitious,” White charged. “She was an unscrupulous reporter in a good many ways . . .”¹¹⁵ In an earlier interview, White described Higgins as, “A dangerous venomous bitch - - and a bad reporter.”¹¹⁶ White’s emotionally powered denigration of Higgins appeared directed more toward who she is (a woman) rather than what she did. White summed up his attitudes about Higgins’ gender when he said, “We’d all have been better off if she’d been there [in Paris] covering fashions.”¹¹⁷

After leaving the *Herald Tribune* in 1950, White found little success elsewhere. He worked for a period for *Look* magazine in Europe.¹¹⁸ When Richard Kluger interviewed him in 1981 he was out of journalism working as a special projects manager for the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation in New York.¹¹⁹ In his unpublished interview notes, Richard Kluger described White as, “A short, voluble man with a mellow voice and rather dour assessment of most people ... a nay-sayer.”¹²⁰

In her autobiography, *News Is a Singular Thing*, Higgins painted a picture of her journalistic practices during her time in Berlin that was very different from that given by White. Higgins suggested that she was sensitive to the importance of

¹¹⁵ White, "Letter to Richard Kluger."

¹¹⁶ White, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹¹⁷ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.125.

¹¹⁸ Homer Bigart, "Letter to Gladys," September 17, 1951, Box 1, Homer Bigart Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

¹¹⁹ White, "Letter to Richard Kluger."

¹²⁰ White, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

teamwork when she wrote about how the *Herald Tribune* bureau was productive even though she was the only reporter.

“I was able to keep up a rough pace because of my staff, which I had trained myself and of which I was very proud. In this period I had two secretaries, one for the day shift and one for the night trick. . . . I expected my assistants to work as hard as I did and take as much pride in the exclusives we broke and feel the same sense of disaster when we were beaten.”¹²¹

Contrary to White’s allegation, Higgins also described the system she established in cooperation with other news organizations, saying that she relied “on Selkirk Panton, of the London *Daily Express*, for news of British headquarters, and in return I kept him posted about routine coverage in American sectors. I made the same deal with the French correspondents.”¹²² Higgins’ account of how she expanded her reach beyond the capabilities of a one-reporter office reflected her management’s satisfaction with the balance it created with her newspaper’s primary competition, the *New York Times*.

“Through cooperative arrangements, tipsters, and the local news agency, we were assured notification of any obvious news event. Even the competition with the *New York Times* had assumed a kind of pattern. [Drew] Middleton and [Ed] Morrow would inevitably scoop me from time to time and, happily for me, I would also inevitably scoop them from time to time. I had received enough congratulatory messages from the home office to make me immune to patronizing.”¹²³

Higgins described White as a “talented writer” and a person “remarkably free of self-doubt.”¹²⁴ Higgins’ opinion was that, “White had decided that I drank too

¹²¹ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.178.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.172.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.178.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.186

much coffee, smoked too many cigarettes, worked unnecessarily hard, and as a woman reporter would be better off in Paris.”¹²⁵

Even though Higgins wrote about White’s attempt to remove her from her Berlin post in her autobiography, and of her transfer from Berlin to Tokyo, she did not link the two incidents in her account. Higgins described the circumstances of her transfer to Tokyo as being in accord with the *Herald Tribune*’s policy for assigning journalists to overseas posts. The newspaper assigned correspondents to overseas posts for two-year periods. If the correspondent was returned to an overseas post following home leave at the end of the first tour of duty, it was the custom at the newspaper that the reporter would serve a second two-year period in the same city.¹²⁶

Higgins was promoted to Berlin bureau chief in the summer of 1947. It is documented that she was on home leave in spring 1949, because editor John Price noted in a May 24, 1949 diary entry that he had “supper with Maggie who flies back to Europe in the morning.”¹²⁷ Since she was being sent back to Berlin, presumably her expectation was that she would complete another two-year assignment.

It was shortly after Higgins returned to Berlin, sometime during the summer of 1949, that the *Herald Tribune* management began discussion with her of the transfer to Tokyo.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.186.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.202.

¹²⁷ John Price, "Roundtable Collection of Letters from Former New York Herald Tribune Staff Members," Box 9, Folders 219-223, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

. . . I had returned to Berlin from home leave, expecting, as is the custom on returning to an assignment, to complete another two-year tour. And although the airlift was over, Berlin remained enough of a cold war center to warrant a very substantial share of front-page headlines.

“When I mentioned my reluctance to be transferred from this exciting news center, my New York editors tried to make the prospect more attractive with suggestions that my experience with the German occupation would be an excellent background for a newspaper series comparing German and Japan. I was not cheered. Such a series would scarcely keep me occupied for a very long time. Worse, it was likely to appeal to a very limited and specialized audience. Journalism in the Far East seemed certain to offer a much too soothing contrast with the urgency of the Berlin story, which compelled the reader’s interest because the events bore directly on the world’s chances for peace. Such anyway, was my thinking in my monumental ignorance of the Far East and its potentialities as a tinderbox.”¹²⁸

Higgins’ account makes it clear that the reason given to her by the *Herald Tribune* management for transfer from her post in Germany was that, “. . . Joe Newman, our Moscow correspondent, wanted to come to Berlin and his standing in the New York office was higher than mine.”¹²⁹ In addition to Newman’s desires, Higgins’ editors apparently had told her their reasons for wanting him to replace her. “Berlin was a logical berth for Newman not only because he was a fine reporter but because it offered a good vantage point for coverage of Soviet tactics in Eastern Europe, a subject on which he had a special background.”¹³⁰

Research in the Joseph Newman Papers uncovered previously unpublished material that confirmed Higgins’ explanation of the circumstances. It is obvious from these archive manuscripts of Newman that at the time the editors of the *Herald Tribune* told Higgins they wanted to transfer her out of Berlin, they had been

¹²⁸ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, pp.202-03.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.203.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.205.

discussing the transfer of Newman to Germany with him for over nine months. In a letter to his editors in New York on September 23, 1948, Newman wrote that he wanted to stay in Moscow for several more months and discussed options for his next assignment. Further, it apparently was important to Newman and his newspaper in deciding his next post that his coverage of Russia continue.

“ . . . And I’d also like to hear from you, Frank, as to when you have to make a decision on the Frankfurt assignment and whether it can be held open over the winter . . . If the Western German government is established at Frankfurt I can see the importance of the assignment there, but if it should not materialize then I wouldn’t be so sure. Then it has occurred to me that it might be worthwhile considering a roving European assignment to cover Russia from the outside, should New York decide to suspend coverage from inside.”

“But at any rate, I’m certainly interested in the Frankfurt idea and I’d like to hear more of what you think of it in terms of future news. Perhaps Frankfurt could be combined with some work of covering Russia from outside and with coverage of international meetings at Geneva in which the Russians participate. That could make the Frankfurt post still more important.”¹³¹

While Higgins was on home leave following her initial two years in Berlin, Newman’s situation in Moscow was becoming difficult. Between April and October 1949, Newman communicated to New York about the two major problems he was facing. Russian censors were becoming more restrictive in their editing of Newman’s dispatches from Moscow. In addition, Newman wanted to leave Russia temporarily to visit his fiancé. His concern was that he would not be granted a re-entry visa, and that his trip effectively would close the *Herald Tribune*’s Moscow office. Major newspapers and news organizations were aware that the Russians would welcome a reduction of the world press in their country. On April 12, 1949, Newman wrote one of many messages to the Press Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

¹³¹ Joseph Newman, "Letter to Frank," September 23, 1948, Box 1, Folder 1, Joseph Newman Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

regarding his visa request, "I would like to leave Moscow for a very short time to visit my fiancé, who is presently in Bern . . . I plan to return to Moscow about three weeks after I leave. Would you be kind enough to assist in arranging for me an exit and re-entry visa which would be valid for one month?"¹³² Newman wrote the Ministry of Foreign Affairs again in May and June, all without success.¹³³

By October 1949 Newman did leave Moscow to get married, and did so not knowing whether he would be allowed to re-enter the country. When he learned that the Russians would not allow him to return, he wrote foreign editor Walter Kerr about his next assignment

"Regarding the future I would prefer Berlin to Prague if the Berlin bureau will soon be available. While the Berlin story itself may not now be as hot as it was until recently, it would be a better place for me to continue work on the Soviet press at the same time . . . that I was thinking of mostly was continuing to work with the same kind of material which I had in Moscow but doing it from the outside. Berlin would be an ideal spot for that, and this work could be combined with coverage of the Berlin story."¹³⁴

From Higgins' autobiography, we know that her editors broached the subject of her leaving Berlin in late summer or early fall 1949, at the time they were confronting Newman's situation in Moscow. From Newman's October 5, 1949 letter it is clear that the Berlin bureau assignment was being discussed but no decision had yet been made. It is apparent that *Herald Tribune* editors did not act until October or

¹³² Joseph Newman, "Letter to Press Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, USSR," April 12, 1949, Box 1, Joseph Newman Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

¹³³ Joseph Newman, "Letter to Press Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, USSR," June 6, 1949, Box 1, Joseph Newman Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI; Joseph Newman, "Letter to Press Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, USSR," May 6, 1949, Box 1, Joseph Newman Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

¹³⁴ Joseph Newman, "Letter to Walter Kerr," October 5, 1949, Box 1, Joseph Newman Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

November, as Higgins' archival collection includes a letter from Newman in early December regarding their new assignments.

“I understand from Geoff [Parsons] that you were scheduled to leave around January 26th. It would be a great help to me if you could possibly hold on until about the 7th of February” “Could you write me a few words ... ? Lucia (my wife) was curious about household furnishings, etc., wondering whether we should bring anything.” “I think you are going to like the Tokyo assignment. For one thing it's a beautiful country. From a news point of view, I should think it will become increasingly important with the fall of China to the communists. I've still a number of friends in Tokyo whom I hope you'll meet. But we'll talk about that later. All the best, (signed) Joe”¹³⁵

The New York *Herald Tribune's* influence on Higgins' legacy.

As noted above in the Methodology section, this study takes into account the possibility that Higgins' colleagues may not have known all the facts that influenced her professional behavior, and thus may have formed attitudes and / or bias against her based on incomplete information. May¹³⁶ and Keeshen wrote about Higgins' aggressiveness. Keeshen discussed the fact that Higgins was not liked because of her ambition and ruthlessness.¹³⁷ Kluger,¹³⁸ Edwards,¹³⁹ Roth,¹⁴⁰ and Sebba¹⁴¹ included comments and / or descriptions of competitive and aggressive behavior by Higgins in their books. The descriptions of Higgins' behavior by these authors reflect judgments that Higgins' colleagues made about her behavior. A critically important factor that

¹³⁵ Joseph Newman, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins," December 7, 1949, Box 2, Correspondence N, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹³⁶ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, pp.125,212.

¹³⁷ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.134.

¹³⁸ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.441.

¹³⁹ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, pp.195-96.

¹⁴⁰ Roth, *Historical Dictionary of War Journalism*, p.142.

¹⁴¹ Sebba, *Battling for News: The Rise of the Woman Reporter*, p.194.

influenced Higgins' actions as a journalist was her relationship with the management and editors at the *Herald Tribune*. By examining what is known about that relationship, it can be determined whether the *Herald Tribune* caused or influenced behavior that Higgins' peers may have found objectionable, and which therefore may have contributed to their allegations. The factors related to the *Herald Tribune* fall into several categories.

- Resentment at the New York *Herald Tribune* because Higgins was assigned to Europe.

Higgins' received a major "break" after she worked at the newspaper for only two years when she was assigned to Europe to cover the end of World War II. While this opportunity opened the door for her to become a war correspondent and foreign journalist, it may have come at a price. The selection of Higgins caused resentment on the part of men at the *Herald Tribune*, because she was young and a woman - - and because men wanted the assignment she was given. Information about management practices at the *Herald Tribune* obtained through archival research for this study confirm that the process through which Higgins obtained her overseas assignment violated traditional lines of authority and responsibility at the newspaper, and therefore may well have been the cause for a considerable amount of resentment by the staff.

The resentment stemmed from the fact that to get this assignment Higgins went "outside of channels straight to . . . Mrs. Helen Rogers Reid . . ." ¹⁴² Though Mrs. Reid is known to have had an interest in promoting the careers of women at the *Herald Tribune*, in 1944 she did not have management responsibility for the editorial

¹⁴² Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.46.

side of the newspaper's operations other than the women's section. Higgins indicated that getting Mrs. Reid to intercede on her behalf was not an easy task. Higgins wrote:

“Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, then the women's editor of the paper . . . plugged hard for me with no other motive than a conviction that I could do a good job. As Mrs. Bromley was working closely with Mrs. Reid and conferred with her frequently, she did much to see that the case of getting Higgins overseas was never dropped.”¹⁴³

Mrs. Reid's son, Whitelaw, confirmed years later, “Marguerite Higgins would not have gotten her start without a push from H.R. [Helen Reid]”¹⁴⁴ Accordingly, in August of 1944, George Cornish, the managing editor of the *Herald Tribune*, called Higgins into his office and told her, “You are all set for overseas.”¹⁴⁵ Cornish most certainly did not like this decision dictated from above. Cornish attributed the decision to the fact that “Helen Reid . . . [was] a feminist.”¹⁴⁶

In her autobiography, Higgins acknowledged that she “outraged” some of the staff by appealing to Mrs. Reid for intervention. Higgins even admitted that Cornish was correct in his assessment of Mrs. Reid's motives, acknowledging that she may have acted for ideological reasons other than sharing Dorothy Bromley's belief that Higgins could do a good job. “Since she knew personally some of the pressures on a woman in the competitive newspaper world,” Higgins wrote, “Mrs. Reid was undoubtedly unusually receptive to my plea for a chance at foreign corresponding.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Reid, "Letter to Richard Kluger."

¹⁴⁵ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.55.

¹⁴⁶ Clark, "Interview by K. Keeshen."

¹⁴⁷ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.46.

Resentment over the intervention by Helen Reid is likely based on two factors. First, Higgins went outside of established channels of management authority to make the request. Second, Mrs. Reid interjected her will into a management system that bestowed a great deal of responsibility and authority to the men who ran the newspaper. Reporter Judith Crist, who was working in the New York office at the time, said that Higgins' assignment overseas caused resentment. "Would it not?" Crist asked. "You want to do your own assigning. And operate your staff."¹⁴⁸ As mentioned above in chapter four, Ogden Reid delegated the management of his newspaper to three senior executives and a handful of senior editors. These individuals operated with autonomy in their areas of responsibility. According to Joseph Barnes, who served as foreign editor until the late 1940s, at the time Higgins was assigned overseas, there "may have been fifteen or sixteen men at the *Herald Tribune* who, in effect, were responsible for the production of the paper."¹⁴⁹ This system of distributed responsibility without strong direction or interference from the top created an unusual management structure with unforeseen consequences. The fact that editors had responsibility for the overseas assignment of reporters, and that Mrs. Reid therefore usurped the authority for this decision in the case of Higgins, is documented. Foreign editor Joseph Barnes wrote, ". . . whether or not we should send a man at great expense to cover the war in Finland, whether or not we should do this or that, was left *entirely* at the operating level . . ."[*italics mine*]¹⁵⁰ No doubt, the resentment caused by Mrs. Reid's intervention was directed at Higgins personally.

¹⁴⁸ Crist, "Interview by Author."

¹⁴⁹ Barnes, "Reminiscences of Joseph F. Barnes."

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Walter Arm, who worked beside Higgins on the city desk said that he had besieged Barnes for an overseas assignment, but to no avail.¹⁵¹ Editor Otis Guernsey recalled years later that Higgins had been turned down by Barnes, making the overruling of Barnes' decision by Mrs. Reid a cause of bitterness.¹⁵²

- The impact of poor management practices at the *Herald Tribune*.

To understand the influence that decisions and actions by the management and editors of the *Herald Tribune* had on Higgins, one needs to examine how management of the newspaper changed following the death of Ogden Reid in 1947. Archival research conducted for this study establishes a new understanding of the change in the management processes and forces within the *Herald Tribune* that were not even identified by Kluger in *The Paper*, his history of the newspaper. As will be shown later, these changes had an enormous impact on Higgins' relationship with the paper.

When Mrs. Reid took over the management of the *Herald Tribune* following the death of her husband, she became a more visible force at the newspaper. Unlike Ogden, who enjoyed drinking elbow-to-elbow with the staff downstairs at Bleeck's, Mrs. Reid was elitist and aloof, and as a result was not popular among the staff. Reporter Judith Crist recalled, "Helen Reid was one of the most abominable people I've ever met."¹⁵³ Reporters and editors felt that, while Ogden may have been drunk most of the time, at least he understood the newspaper business. Mrs. Reid, they

¹⁵¹ Walter Arm, "Autobiography," Undated, Box 1, Folder 11, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁵² Otis L. Guernsey, Jr, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 6, Folder 110, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁵³ Crist, "Interview by Author."

believed, did not. Reporter and bureau chief Robert Donovan summed up this view, saying that Mrs. Reid “had no newspaper smarts or savvy. The able, bright wives of publishers have plagued any number of papers. You can’t perform brain surgery if you haven’t been to med school.”¹⁵⁴ The staff also resented that fact that Mrs. Reid immediately interjected her personal interests into the editorial coverage of the newspaper. Crist remembered that, “If somebody belched at Barnard College, because she [Mrs. Reid] was a Barnard graduate, that had to make a story in the *Tribune*.”¹⁵⁵ Bureau chief Walter Kerr thought that the fact Mrs. Reid inherited the newspaper was a tragedy. Kerr said that the paper was “a vehicle or the doorway to political influence and her [Mrs. Reid’s] own presumed prestige.”¹⁵⁶

Following the death of Ogden Reid, power shifted from the editorial staff at the newspaper to the business executives. Mrs. Reid and her eldest son, Whitelaw, assumed operating responsibility for the newspaper.¹⁵⁷ Whitelaw not only lacked experience, Mrs. Reid dominated him, as she increasingly inserted her will into the production of the newspaper, to the point where some described her as ruthless.¹⁵⁸ The newspapermen who had been given management authority, like Geoffrey Parsons, Joseph Barnes, L.L. Engelking and the others, either resigned or were fired over the coming years as the advertising, circulation, business, and promotion

¹⁵⁴ Donovan, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁵⁵ Crist, "Interview by Author."

¹⁵⁶ Kerr, "Letter to Richard Kluger."

¹⁵⁷ Donovan, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁵⁸ Dick West, "Roundtable of Letters from Former New York *Herald Tribune* Staff Members, Collected by John Price," Undated, Box 9, Folders 219-223, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

executives took over. By making this change, Mrs. Reid “drove a wedge between the editorial staff and management.”¹⁵⁹

The autonomy enjoyed by Ogden’s executive staff and editors was replaced by the centralized authority of a Planning Board over which Mrs. Reid presided at monthly meetings. The Planning Board governed everything - - local news, pictures, news mix, character of paper, personnel decisions, potential hires, assignments, finances, circulation, etc.¹⁶⁰ Minutes taken at the Planning Board meeting that took place on March 24, 1949 indicated that the decision-making process had been shifted from a few key executives to a very large committee - - twenty-two people were recorded as present.¹⁶¹ Editorial matters no longer were the province of the editors, as evidenced by reports from three committees that were presented at the meeting. The committee on local or human-interest news was headed by the newspaper’s chief editorial writer rather than the more logical choice of city editor (although he was a committee member). The paper’s circulation manager also was a member of this editorial committee, revealing increased power held by business executives. As the Planning Board considered such issues as whether the newspaper would benefit from a society reporter, whether it should make an offer to a syndicated entertainment columnist, and the design of the page opposite the editorials, the views of executives responsible for circulation, syndication, advertising and business affairs appeared to

¹⁵⁹ Crist, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁶⁰ New York *Herald Tribune*, "Planning Board Meeting Minutes," May 8, 1947, Box 2, Folder 31, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

have had weight equal to that of the editors of the newspaper.¹⁶² Those editors must have been dismayed to realize how much the *Herald Tribune* had changed since the death of Ogden Reid only two years earlier.

An internal *Herald Tribune* document was found in the Richard Kluger Papers that provides evidence that the ineffective management practices continued throughout the remaining years that the Reid family owned and managed the newspaper. In 1956, John Bogart conducted a series of interviews on behalf of management to discover the “prevailing opinions” of the staff. One of Bogart’s findings was that the paper’s reporters felt:

“they never know where they are at; and they lack orientation either on what they are supposed to do or on what the paper as a whole is trying to do. . . . There also was criticism of the annual report meetings Complaint was made that nothing really was revealed or explained.”¹⁶³

The impact that this changed management process had on Higgins is demonstrated in the following examples:

- Lack of response by newspaper management to Steven White’s attempt to remove Higgins from Berlin enabled the charges made by him to become part of Higgins’ historical record.

The promotion of Higgins to Berlin bureau chief in 1947 took place during the regime of Ogden Reid. The problems she experienced in Berlin with reporter Steven White, discussed above in chapter four, occurred after Mrs. Reid and the Planning Board took the reins of management following Ogden’s death.

¹⁶² New York *Herald Tribune*, "Planning Board Meeting Minutes," March 24, 1949, D253, Helen Rogers Reid Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

¹⁶³ John Bogart, "Letter to Cameron," April 12, 1956, Box 1, Folder 12, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

White claimed that he made his case against Higgins to Geoffrey Parsons, Jr., who was editor-publisher of the Paris edition of the *Herald Tribune*. White described Parsons' authority as being "head of the *Trib* foreign correspondents in Europe."¹⁶⁴ That description probably is correct, because Joe Newman, Higgins' replacement in Berlin, referred to his "understand[ing] from Geoff" about the timing of the switch in assignments.¹⁶⁵ Whatever his authority, Geoffrey Parson, Jr. had a lot of influence in the New York office. His father was chief editorial writer and had worked for the newspaper for thirty-five years. In addition, the elder Parsons had a very close relationship with Helen Rogers Reid.¹⁶⁶ Given the seriousness of White's charges against Higgins, it is almost impossible to imagine that they did not come to the attention of the editors in New York and to Mrs. Reid.

In light of Mrs. Reid's known interest in promoting the careers of women at the *Herald Tribune*, it is surprising that there is no evidence in the archival material of her support for Higgins in defense against White. Less surprising is the fact that the newspaper's management did not confront White on the matter. The dilution of the management responsibility of the newspaper's editors and the diffusion of management authority by operating the business through a committee likely meant that no authority was in place to be responsive to White and to clarify the situation. Over thirty years later, White asserted to Richard Kluger that his allegations were true and that he had been successful in having Higgins removed from Europe. Because the *Herald Tribune* management had not publicly stated its support for Higgins,

¹⁶⁴ White, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁶⁵ Newman, "Letter to Marguerite Higgins."

¹⁶⁶ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.201.

rebuked White, or otherwise communicated its stand on the matter to all concerned, the characterization of Higgins' behavior that White used in making his charges remained unchallenged and reinforced the negative opinions held by Higgins' peers. Even more damaging to Higgins, the charges became part of the printed record of Higgins' legacy because they appeared in books by Kluger, May and Edwards.

- Mismanagement by the *Herald Tribune* of Homer Bigart's attempt to remove Higgins from covering the Korean war fueled negative attitudes held by male journalists about women war correspondents in general and Higgins in particular.

Higgins wrote that during the early hours of the Korean War she and several other reporters desperately tried to find transportation from Tokyo to Seoul. When they finally were about to board an airplane for the flight across the Sea of Japan to the Korean peninsula, one of her male companions "tried to dissuade me from going along"¹⁶⁷ According to journalist Bob Considine, "In Korea, women correspondents were still resented by their male counterparts . . ."¹⁶⁸ Julia Edwards remembered her experience in Korea. "I described the correspondents I met in Korea as 'Male chauvinist pigs,'" Edwards said. . . "It took enormous endurance to get any editor to send a woman to Korea. Only to be met by cub correspondents shouting that women had no business in Korea."¹⁶⁹ *Life* magazine's Carl Mydans explained, "The men regarded reporting as their privileged territory. That a woman would invade the war

¹⁶⁷ Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.17.

¹⁶⁸ Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, p.190.

¹⁶⁹ Edwards, "Letter to Donna Schmadel."

area – their most sacred domain – and then turn out to be equally talented and sometimes more courageous was something that couldn't be accepted gracefully.”¹⁷⁰

Higgins learned just how “disgraceful” her male colleagues could be.

“Each time I'd go back to Tokyo,” Higgins wrote, “Carl [Mydans] would fill me in on the latest crop of Maggie Higgins stories. Once, very discouraged, I complained bitterly about them to Jimmy Cannon, columnist for the *New York Post*. He said, ‘If the *Racing Form* sent a racehorse to cover the war, he wouldn't be any more of an oddity than you are. That horse's activities would be the subject of all sorts of stories, and nobody would care how true they were so long as they were good stories. You're in the same fix and you'd better just quit worrying about what you hear.’”¹⁷¹

Higgins' problems escalated almost immediately following the invasion of South Korea with the arrival of Homer Bigart, the *Herald Tribune's* experienced war correspondent. As discussed in chapter two, Bigart told Higgins to return to Tokyo or she would be fired. Higgins cabled her editors in New York saying she wanted to stay at the front. Although it is not clear that the editors in New York answered her cable, some time later she received a letter from Bill (assumed to be Bill Robinson, who at the time was the newspaper's most senior executive other than the Reids). He apparently addressed the Bigart episode, because Higgins sent back this detailed and heartfelt response:

“Thanks for your note. It's always nice to hear from you and this time especially so since been so miserably unhappy about almost everything concerning the paper since the war started.

“There is one thing I'd like to have absolutely straight. And that is that I had no objection to Homer's assignment out here. I realize that he represents dollars and cents to the paper. But I resented very much the complete lack of diplomacy and public relations with which Walter [Kerr] or Frank or Cornish or whoever was responsible sent the guy out here. He came with fists flying and you can imagine what it would be like, after a week at the front to have a guy on your own paper greet you with ‘get back to Tokyo or I

¹⁷⁰ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, pp.164-65.

¹⁷¹ Higgins, *War in Korea*, p.108.

will see that you get fired etc.’ And above all to go around to your colleagues like Carl Mydans and try to talk them out of taking you to the front threatening them with responsibility for getting me fired etc.

“Homer said that he would under no circumstances cooperate with me and my quarrel with the paper is not for sending him out here but for not briefing him that after this was my area and that he should try to cooperate. I don’t think that Walter [Kerr] should send people out here who have decided in advance that they will not cooperate with the other guy in the area.

“It’s all very boring and childish and generally sickening.”¹⁷²

While the Homer Bigart Papers provided limited material for this study, the collection did contain an several letters that shed new light on the Higgins-Bigart conflict in Korea. First, it seems likely that Homer Bigart was acting on his own when he threatened that Higgins would be fired. As a correspondent, he certainly did not have the authority to terminate a fellow journalist. Further, in a letter Bigart wrote to Richard Kluger in 1982 he discussed his actions solely from a first-person perspective, making no mention that he was acting on behalf of the newspaper’s management.

“No way can I make by my difficulties with Miss Higgins appear in a favorable light, certainly not in these days of Equal Rights. I didn’t behave well, and I sure as hell wasn’t chivalrous.

“In mitigation I can only say that Korea was a very narrow front at the outset. As a war correspondent of considerable experience *I felt* [italics mine] that I could cover the action and that Miss Higgins should get back to Tokyo and cover MacArthur’s headquarters. We were the Trib’s entire staff in the Far East.

“Mis Higgins felt differently.”¹⁷³

The fact that Bigart was acting on his own was confirmed further in a comment made by the newspaper’s managing editor George Cornish, “We could hardly have been blamed for sending our two stars to cover Korea. I don’t think it

¹⁷² Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Bill [Robinson]," 1950, Box 2, Correspondence R, Marguerite Higgins Papers. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

¹⁷³ Homer Bigart, "Letter to Richard Kluger," January 27, 1982, Box 2, Folder 29, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

occurred to any of us that there would be a clash between them.”¹⁷⁴ In another communication with Kluger, Bigart described his clash with Higgins as “a tussle over turf.”¹⁷⁵ This view also was offered by one of their colleagues at the *Herald Tribune*, who said that the problem was a result of a “lack of clear definition of respective spheres of activity.”¹⁷⁶

Bigart’s confrontation with Higgins in Korea strongly suggests that he, like many of his male colleagues, was biased against women journalists. Given the number of reporters that the *New York Times*, the news services and other organizations had covering the war, Bigart’s defense of his act, that the Korean War was a narrow front, is absurd. Described as he was, as a grizzled, middle age war correspondent, it is probable that he harbored traditional male values and believed war reporting was a man’s preserve. Given that he acted against Higgins on his own accord, one must look for motivation within Bigart’s character. It is not unreasonable to conclude that he acted out of gender bias.

From the perspective of Higgins’ legacy, the widely talked about and publicized feud between Higgins and Bigart most certainly fueled negative attitudes towards her. Bigart was revered by his journalist colleagues. That Higgins - - a woman - - would take a stand against this icon of war correspondents, would only confirm the opinion of some men that women should not be reporting in a combat zone. By remaining at the front and taking risks in covering Korea, Higgins attracted

¹⁷⁴ Clark, "Interview by K. Keeshen."

¹⁷⁵ Homer Bigart, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1981, Box 2, Folder 29, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁷⁶ Baehr, "Letter to Richard Kluger."

even more criticism.¹⁷⁷ Her actions fueled exaggerated stories of her “kicking injured marines off planes in Korea so she could get around.”¹⁷⁸ Higgins taking on Bigart, and apparently winning, likely brought out the worst attitudes among male correspondents. May wrote, “when *Tim* cabled Frank Gibney [their correspondent] in Korea, suggesting a feature on the woman reporter with the innocent face, Gibney promptly cabled back, ‘She’s as innocent as a cobra.’ The very presence of a woman there as a reporter infuriated him, and the idea that his own publication thought it news-worthy was too much.”¹⁷⁹

Once again, it may be that management deficiencies in New York were to blame for controversy in overseas coverage. As Higgins suggested in her letter to Bill Robinson, Bigart was not given clear orders when he was sent to Korea. Once the conflict arose between its two correspondents, the *Herald Tribune* management did not take quick action to settle the matter. In fact, it seems that the *Herald Tribune* executives even avoided acting on a proposed solution. When foreign editor Walter Kerr tried to resolve the conflict by defining areas that Higgins and Bigart would cover in Korea, he was overruled by Bill Robinson and the Reid family.¹⁸⁰

- Lack of disclosure of Higgins’ contract by newspaper management when she worked in Washington.

In chapter five, information obtained from the Ogden Rogers Reid Papers was discussed regarding the contractual relationship Higgins established with the *Herald*

¹⁷⁷ Belford, *Brilliant Bylines: A Biographical Anthology of Notable Newspaperwomen in America*, p.285.

¹⁷⁸ Shaplen, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁷⁹ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.173.

¹⁸⁰ Kerr, "Letter to Kathleen Keeshen."

Tribune. Higgins was pursuing her job in accordance with the terms of the contracts she signed in 1956 and 1959. The lack of disclosure of those contracts to Walter Kerr when he was Washington bureau chief created a problem that caused him to resign from the newspaper. The apparent lack of a directive to bureau chief Robert Donovan that he should abide by the terms of Higgins' contract resulted in friction between Higgins and Donovan. To others in the organization, who also were not aware of Higgins' contracts, even those who worked in the Washington bureau, the perception of what was taking place was very different than that suggested by the facts. This was confirmed in a letter Homer Bigart wrote to his aunt that contained a version of events in the Washington bureau that was incorrect.

“Joe Alsop is here. He gave me all the gossip about what’s happening in the Washington Bureau of the *Tribune*. I think I told you that Walter Kerr quit as buro [sic] chief. He quit because Maggie Higgins was taking over. It seems that when she heard I was leaving the *Tribune* she went to Brownie and demanded a fat contract, saying that Hearst had offered her a lot of money. Under the contract she can take any assignment she likes, including the White House. When he heard of this, Walter said he could not run the bureau under those conditions, and quit. So did Jack Tait. I guess I’m lucky to have quit when I did.”¹⁸¹

Bigart and others thought that Kerr resigned because Higgins was “taking over” the Washington bureau rather than for the real reason - - because of the deception of Ogden Rogers Reid about Higgins' contract. Robert Donovan certainly must have known better because he would have seen correspondence regarding the contract in the bureau chief's files. In addition, since Higgins' contract was so important to Whitehead, the man Donovan replaced as bureau chief, it likely was discussed during the transition of the position. In a 1981 interview with Richard

¹⁸¹ Homer Bigart, "Letter to Gladys," May 29, 1965, Box 1, Homer Bigart Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, WI.

Kluger, however, Donovan repeated the pejorative line, saying that Higgins “complained [to Brownie Reid] in her little cute way that she should ... be able to cover any story she wanted to. Brownie agreed and told Walter Kerr, who knew she’d be doing leads on Presidential press conferences so he quit.”¹⁸² Later in the interview Donovan reinterpreted those events even further to say inexplicably that Higgins “succeeded in getting Kerr fired.”¹⁸³ Warren Rogers, who Donovan hired, remembered that his boss “put up with an intolerable situation and eventually [Donovan] got his way: her star began to wane. The only sour note in the bureau was Maggie.”¹⁸⁴ Rogers said that Higgins “waived it [her contract] around a lot - resenting people who tried to get in her way and wouldn’t indulge her, like Bob Donovan, whom she tried to get fired ...”¹⁸⁵

In the Washington bureau, however, another management issue was evident. Roscoe Drummond, who preceded Walter Kerr as bureau chief, was described as mostly interested in writing his column as opposed to managing the bureau.¹⁸⁶ Kerr was detached and didn’t involve himself with his reporters. Donovan, rather than the strong leader he described himself as, in the view of others was more likely to try to

¹⁸² Donovan, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Rogers, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Farris, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

manage through indirect requests than direct orders.¹⁸⁷ In fact, Donovan was described by reporter Earl Ubell as not being a good communicator.”¹⁸⁸

Herald Tribune management in New York was responsible for putting a bureau chief in place who could manage the staff effectively, but Donovan arguably did not fit that bill. Donovan clearly didn't use Higgins' personal relationships with the Kennedy family and Nikita Khrushchev to the advantage of the *Herald Tribune*. Based on his communication with Kluger, one might conclude that Donovan was more interested in keeping Higgins under his control than in maximizing the use of her assets for the benefit of the newspaper, or respecting the terms of her contact. Donovan wrote that he had “serious troubles” with Higgins, but the reason he gave was her resistance to his efforts to restrict her activities to the State Department. He resented the fact that she complained about that to New York. But what Donovan did not acknowledge is that Higgins had a contractual right to complain.¹⁸⁹ A better manager, perhaps one more focused on maximizing the productivity of his staff rather than exercising his control, might have dealt with Higgins in the context of her contract. She had very good relationships at the highest levels of U.S. and foreign governments. One could argue that a more enlightened management approach would have taken advantage of these relationships for the benefit of the newspaper. Donovan's description of his behavior and the attitudes about him expressed by others suggest that he may not have been the right man for the job.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ubell, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹⁸⁹ Donovan, "Letter to Betty."

Far worse, of course, is that the newspaper's executives signed an agreement with Higgins that they did not honor or enforce. As specified in Higgins' contract, it was to have been *mutually* decided whether she would have top assignments, such as accompanying Nixon to Moscow, covering Khrushchev in Washington, attending the 1960 Democratic convention, and covering the 1961 Kennedy-Khrushchev conference in Vienna. By not honoring the contract, management put her in a confrontational position with Donovan. For Ogden Rogers Reid not to have told Kerr about Higgins' agreement was dereliction of his duty. Further, archive material shows that Reid engaged in back-channel communication with Higgins that further undermined Kerr's position. Reid suggested that she take up any problems with him personally.¹⁹⁰ He conspired with Higgins on ways to make Kerr feel that he was more in charge than he really was.¹⁹¹ Had Ogden Reid and his management team in New York been open, not only with the Washington bureau chiefs, but with the entire staff, then misperceptions of Higgins' actions in Washington might not have contributed to negative attitudes and judgments that were building against her. That this lapse in management practice was damaging to the attitudes that the newspapers staff had about Higgins was confirmed in the survey of staff opinions conducted by Bogart in 1956. In his report, Bogart listed several situations that staff members cited as examples of the paper's management team not "handling" people correctly. One

¹⁹⁰ Marguerite Higgins, "Letter to Ogden Rogers Reid," 1956, Box 10, Folder 234, Ogden Rogers Reid Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

example was “the apparent approval of the alleged disruptive actions of Miss Higgins [in Washington].”¹⁹²

Kluger misrepresented the impact that Higgins’ contract had on Kerr, when he was Washington bureau chief. Kluger made reference to her contract and described the difficult situation in which Kerr was put because he was not aware of its existence. Kluger’s version, however, while it acknowledged the fact that Kerr did not have knowledge of the contract, misrepresented the facts by making it appear that Kerr was fired over the incident rather than resigning. Kluger wrote that Kerr was “ascetic, somewhat withdrawn,” not language one would use to describe a capable manager. And even though the only information in Kluger’s files supports Kerr’s version of events, Kluger wrote that Ogden Reid “jumped at the chance to replace Kerr.”¹⁹³

There appeared to be more to the Donovan – Higgins relationship than just issues about a contract. Donovan said that Higgins [and other women reporters] “felt compelled to resort to outrageous behavior in those days to compensate for a woman’s handicap.”¹⁹⁴ Donovan expressed possible bias against Higgins with extremely serious (and outrageous) allegations, “She was ‘ruthless, deceptive ... [and] was said to have put wounded soldiers off of planes to get on them.’”¹⁹⁵ While most of Higgins’ colleagues saw writing as one weakness among her skills as a journalist, Donovan saw this flaw as somehow responsible for her behavior, which he

¹⁹² Bogart, "Letter to Cameron."

¹⁹³ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.516.

¹⁹⁴ Donovan, "Letter to Betty."

¹⁹⁵ Donovan, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

so strongly disliked. "If only she had learned the discipline of writing," Donovan concluded, "she wouldn't have had to behave so freakishly."¹⁹⁶ In an interview with Kluger, Donovan expressed a negative attitude toward woman journalists in general, saying that he had been turned against them.¹⁹⁷

Possible gender bias that Higgins confronted.

The experiences of Ruth Cowan's use of a man's name and the resistance Helen Kirkpatrick experienced regarding an overseas assignment, both discussed earlier, bring to life the general bias against women in the newspaper industry just prior to 1942, the year Higgins joined the New York *Herald Tribune*. The public image of the *Herald Tribune*, however, was that the newspaper offered an environment relatively more hospitable to women and that they had a greater opportunity for career success there than at other papers. This image was a reflection of the public perception of Helen Rogers Reid. In a *Time* magazine cover story in 1934, Mrs. Reid bragged "no other metropolitan newspaper employs as many female executives."¹⁹⁸ But Mrs. Reid had hired only a few of the women who worked there and had limited influence at the newspaper beyond her responsibility for advertising sales. The *Time* story noted that a month could pass during which the editorial staff would not even see Mrs. Reid. And the report quoted the *Herald Tribune*'s editor giving the reasons usually stated at that time as to why editors had little interest in hiring women reporters. He said they "lack versatility and are practically useless on

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ "The Press: *Herald Tribune's* Lady," *Time* October 8, 1934, 59 -62.

police stories.”¹⁹⁹ When Higgins arrived at the *Herald Tribune*, she entered a male dominated culture that gave little notice to Mrs. Reid and the female executives. Higgins’ indoctrination to gender attitudes at the newspaper came early. “My first instruction in traditional prejudice began long ago in New York,” Higgins wrote in her autobiography, “when I was an unknown cub reporter and no challenge to anybody. In those days I used to be let in on newspaper bull sessions that included some masterly dissections of the ladies.”²⁰⁰

Some on the staff, however, remembered the *Herald Tribune* as treating women who worked as reporters well. Richard West wrote, “I believe that in general women reporters were regarded as on a level with men. There was no deference or coddling that I remember, though some of the gals might quibble.”²⁰¹ West then restated the position that there were “obvious” differences to be considered when he added, “Of course, the city desk tried to suit the individual to the job to be done. Some stories obviously called for a woman. Some as obviously were not a woman’s business.”²⁰² Reporter Judith Crist recalled that when she worked on the city desk she was given “identical assignments as male reporters. There was no difference.”²⁰³ Crist added that the “only sexist thing I remember is that I was on the assignment sheet as Miss Crist. And I wanted to on it as Crist,” just using a last name as was the

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Higgins, *News Is a Singular Thing*, p.204.

²⁰¹ West, “Women on the Paper.”

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Crist, “Interview by Author.”

custom with men.²⁰⁴ But Crist did not think that in the 1940s the newspaper business in general was as biased as it is described from today's vantage point. "That's exaggerated. You'd think that women never drew a liberated breadth until Bella Abzug," she said.²⁰⁵

Crist enrolled in the Columbia University School of Journalism two years following Higgins. The difference in Columbia's enrollment in those two years – 1944 versus 1942 – reveal a great deal about the impact that World War II had on the gender structure of journalism. Higgins was lucky to get one of only eleven openings that the journalism school allocated to women.²⁰⁶ The military draft claimed so many men that when Crist entered Columbia her class was composed of fifty-eight women and only ten men. And of those men, "one was a priest and another a dwarf," Crist said, explaining why her few male classmates had not been lost to the draft.²⁰⁷ Just one year later, the tide shifted against women once again. In 1945 a newspaper editor turned down a job request by Julia Edwards, another Columbia graduate, because he had learned that all forty-one members of his news staff who were now in the military were planning to reclaim their jobs.²⁰⁸

While Higgins was affected by external factors that influenced gender bias in the newspaper industry and at the *Herald Tribune*, her personality characteristics likely brought out the worst of the existing institutionalized attitudes held by her

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.50.

²⁰⁷ Crist, "Interview by Author."

²⁰⁸ Ethridge, "Letter to Julia Edwards."

colleagues. Throughout her career Higgins was criticized for being too aggressive and overly competitive, a characterization accepted and used by most people who have written about her. The observation by Higgins' father that she was driven by the need to achieve the standards of a perfectionist casts an entirely new light on her aggressive behavior. A competitively aggressive person who tries to advance themselves at the expense of others can be judged as mean-spirited and selfish. On the other hand, a person who acts aggressively in response to a psychological disposition to being a perfectionist is driven by internal needs as opposed to external aggression fueled by a competitive drive. The resulting behavior may look to the same to an observer. In Higgins' case the source of her aggressiveness was invisible to her male colleagues, but knowing that source probably would not have modified their response. An aggressive woman in an industry steeped in gender bias is likely to be the target of accusations based on negative attitudes. Those attitudes will be born in the judgment that the woman's behavior does not conform to expectations of the men; or that her behavior is stereotypical of a "bitch." The interaction of Higgins' personality with existing attitudes in the newspaper business was an explosive mixture during her era as a journalist.

The volatility of this mixture might have been mitigated if Higgins' professional skills had presented a different profile. Other women reporters at the *Herald Tribune* were described in Kluger interviews and the writing of Blackman and West in terms that never would have been applied to Higgins. Irita Van Doren was considered "wonderfully intelligent" and "very intellectual."²⁰⁹ "She was a nice,

²⁰⁹ Shriver, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

interesting lady . . .” who “got far on her charm and warmth.”²¹⁰ Van Doren was described as having “. . . a combination of background and intelligence to form a point of view with the charm to promote it . . . always recognizing your right to put forward a point of view yet putting her own forward forthrightly enough in that soft, southern voice.”²¹¹ Reporter Ishbel Ross was “always neat as a pin . . . never exploited her femininity, which was attractive.”²¹² Margaret Parton was known to be a “sensitive writer by reputation . . . a warm, chubby buxom woman, unglamorous and a good writer.”²¹³ The language used to describe these women is consistent with the values that men think women ought to have, and certainly could not be applied to any negative stereotypes.

Higgins, as we have seen, succeeded by being a hard scrambler who dug and dug. Higgins was successful only because she was tough and worked hard. These masculine traits in combination with her perceived aggressive behavior produced a target made-to-order for gender bias in an industry with ingrained negative attitudes towards women.

There is ample evidence that the rumor Higgins stole the Hartford circus fire story from her fellow reporters was well known and accepted by *Herald Tribune* reporters. Given that journalists operate in a small, closed circle prone to gossip, this story about Higgins most likely was circulated widely among her peers. It is possible

²¹⁰ Peter Schwed, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 12, Folder 277, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

²¹¹ Barnes, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²¹² Stowe, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²¹³ Crist, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

that this story, based on an incident when she was a cub reporter, established a question about Higgins' honesty that followed her throughout her career.

In Sonia Tomara's interview, the allegation that Higgins was ambitious and aggressive became linked to the specific charge of stealing news stories. To Tomara, alleged ruthlessness became the rationale for accepting the fact that Higgins stole stories from other reporters, even though Tomara cited no incidents in which this actually took place. Because Higgins' alleged aggressive behavior did not conform to the normative role prescribed for a woman, gender bias became linked to the charge of stealing stories. Would Tomara have assumed that an aggressive male reporter also stole stories?

While a specific example of Higgins stealing a story as described in the accusations was not found, archive material did reveal a way in which other reporters acknowledged that stories were stolen. Walter Cronkite and Toni Howard discussed the fact that following World War II, when journalists got together after hours, some correspondents talked openly about information provided by their sources and that this information could find its way into the accounts filed by their colleagues. Cronkite said that Higgins was "always on" during these sessions, and that he felt he could have been an inadvertent source for her.²¹⁴ Thus, a possible explanation emerges from the research that clarifies how the charge that Higgins stole stories came about. An aggressive woman who was opportunistic in conversations among journalists could acquire the gender-based reputation as a woman who stole stories from other reporters.

²¹⁴ Cronkite, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

In her book chronicling the ascent of women in journalism, Kay Mills described the fundamental presence of gender bias against all women when it comes to the question of sex. Mills observed that while women often were criticized for being sexually active or aggressive, similar behavior by men was considered acceptable. Mills noted that Higgins received more criticism about her alleged sexual behavior than did other female journalists.²¹⁵ Andy Rooney, who knew Higgins in both Paris and Berlin, made exactly the same point. He wrote that while other women journalists were known to have sexual relationships with male reporters, Higgins was singled out.

“She was smart, attractive and unquestionably a good reporter. She was also one of the few I ever knew who was widely disliked by a generally collegial group of war correspondents. . . . No one liked Marguerite Higgins. . . . I traveled from July of 1944 to March of 1945 with the 1st Army press camp. The numbers varied but there were always three to four women among the 25 to 30 reporters. . . . I knew Iris Carpenter, Dickey Chapelle, Margaret Bourke-White, Helen Kirkpatrick, Lee Carson, Mary Welsh, Kathleen Harriman, Virginia Irwin, Ruth Cowan, Judy Barden, Sigrid Schultz, Ann Stringer. All were there at one time or another. Three of them . . . had intimate relationships with men reporters. None except Marguerite Higgins was ever accused of using sex to their professional advantage.”²¹⁶

Journalist Robin Wright suggested to Julia Edwards that a woman’s attractiveness may be a factor in the biased assumption that sexual access to beauty is traded for information. “I have also heard one of my female colleagues, who is a good-looking woman, described as a ‘horizontal reporter,’” Wright said, “which is one way my male peers have of suggesting a woman uses sexual ploys to get

²¹⁵ Mills, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Page*, p.326.

²¹⁶ Andrew A. Rooney, "Letter to the Author.," August 6, 2003, New York NY.

exclusive information. I find this ridiculous and absurd – as well as extremely offensive, to her as well as all women in the field.”²¹⁷

Fred Farris, who worked in the *Herald Tribune* Washington bureau with Higgins, added that the charge about sex was about more than rationalizing exclusives - - it was also about jealousy. “She [Higgins] fought a tough battle constantly against those who, because of sour grapes, felt she got her exclusives and news breaks by using her femininity,” Farris said, “whereas the truth is she had a sharp brain and was a very good reporter”²¹⁸

- Indicator of possible bias – Was Higgins held to a different standard?

While there was a general critical attitude toward women in the newspaper business, Higgins experienced criticism of her character and behavior on terms that were different than those directed against her peers.

In many instances, criticism and judgment of Higgins, both personal and professional, were based on standards that were different than those used for evaluating the similar behavior of a man. These standards were applied to serious and trivial aspects of Higgins’ life. While judgment about a trivial matter may not seem important, it is, in fact, indicative of the degree to which criticism was directed into every area of Higgins’ behavior. The fact that a *Herald Tribune* colleague would think to comment almost twenty years after her death that Higgins showed “lots of brass” by showing up “in the office in a sable coat that reached to the floor” suggests

²¹⁷ Wright, "Letter to Julia Edwards."

²¹⁸ Farris, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

the depth of negative attitudes towards her.²¹⁹ The fact that this same editor admired the flamboyant reporter and columnist Lucius Beebe for similar behavior shows how the double standard applied. Beebe was the “ultimate in class,” he said, “and not only because he was the only one who showed up at the office in white tails and white tie.”²²⁰

On a personal level, one of the charges made against Higgins’ by her critics was that she was manipulative. These charges ranged from references to how she gained access to transportation in Korea, to specific allegations that she manipulated men, through sex or other means, to gain information for stories. For example, reporter William Atwood commented that Higgins sometimes behaved like a helpless, little girl when dealing with men. She had “this little baby girl voice like Jackie Kennedy and would use it, as in ‘Oh, could I please have a few minutes of your time, sir, for an interview (you great big powerful head of state, you).’”²²¹ Julia Edwards also asserted that Higgins’ weapon of choice was manipulation. “Big blue eyes, a high-pitched little girl’s voice, and sex appeal were part of her arsenal,” Edwards wrote. “As a last resort, she used her head.”²²² Directed toward a male correspondent, however, this same allegation was used as an example of cleverness. Homer Bigart, who was regarded as “one of the most accomplished reporters in American journalism”²²³ and who was the nemesis of Higgins when they both

²¹⁹ Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Atwood, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²²² Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*, p.443.

²²³ Richard Severo, "Homer Bigart, Acclaimed Reporter, Dies." *New York Times* April 17, 1991, A20.

covered the Korean War for the *Herald Tribune*, was known for using what his competitors called “Homer’s All-American dummy act.”²²⁴ Bigart was known for putting on his “innocent act” when trying to get a general or other news source to give him information.²²⁵ Bigart even had a reputation for using this trick to get fellow reporters to give him material. Keyes Beech said, “I’ve seen him standing out there in the middle of the road [looking helpless] with young guys feeding him their stuff. . . . [this went so far that] one night [reporter] Don Whitehead said ‘I want to declare myself out of the Help Homer Club.’”²²⁶ By looking helpless, Bigart played “one of the great con games.”²²⁷

Not only was a double standard applied to judgments about Higgins’ behavior as compared to male journalists, different standards were applied to her relative to judgments about other women correspondents as well. As noted above, for example, Higgins was criticized for being manipulative by acting helpless and using her “baby girl voice” to get a news source to be cooperative.²²⁸ For reporter Judith Crist, however, behavior that appeared to be charming and innocent was applauded. Reporter Milt Lewis said that Crist “could act coy and naïve by design (in going after story) but every good reporter uses this gambit in getting a story, conning sources.”²²⁹

²²⁴ Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune*, p.365.

²²⁵ Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²²⁶ Beech, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Atwood, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²²⁹ Lewis, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

Another area in which a double standard was applied was criticism about Higgins' aggressiveness. As we have seen, Higgins was criticized for walking over people in her single-minded and insensitive quest to get a story. While this behavior by Higgins was viewed in negative terms, male journalists were complimented for similar attitudes and acts. *New York Times* Washington bureau chief James Reston complimented his *Herald Tribune* competitor with terms like those used to attack Higgins, when he said that Bert Andrews "would give us . . . trouble . . . a shark – he tasted blood in the water."²³⁰ *Herald Tribune* foreign correspondent Frank Kelly applauded Homer Bigart because, "He was a great digger . . . he just wouldn't take no for an answer." Bigart was viewed by Kelly as heroic for this behavior. "He was fearless: he'd go out on trips (with the troops) that us married guys wouldn't go on," Kelly said.²³¹

Another example of applying a different judgment to Higgins than to men on the issue of aggressiveness involved a charge made by several critics that Higgins hogged one of the few available telephones while covering a story so that other journalists could not file.²³² Conversely, Harrison Salisbury of the *New York Times* bragged about blocking Higgins from using a rare telephone when the two of them were covering the Russian trip of President Richard Nixon.²³³

²³⁰ James Reston, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 11, Folder 252, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

²³¹ Frank Kelly, "Interview by Richard Kluger," 1982, Box 7, Folder 146, Richard Kluger Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library., New Haven, CT.

²³² Whitman, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²³³ Salisbury, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

By contrast, while Higgins was criticized for being tough and aggressive, other women reporters were praised for having these characteristics. Irita Van Doren was thought to be tough while retaining her charm,²³⁴ Judith Crist “could be abrasive and tough, but [with] the right degree of aggressiveness;”²³⁵ and Ishbel Ross was so single-minded in her work, nothing would stop her.²³⁶

Another area in which Higgins’ detractors applied a double standard was in the judgments they made about her sexual behavior. As noted, the discussion of Higgins’ sexuality primarily concerns the ethical question of whether she used sex to obtain information from news sources. The double standard, of course, is that sexual behavior of men during this period was not seen to be the basis for additional ethical or moral criticism. *Herald Tribune* reporter Russell Hill, who knew Higgins in Europe after World War II said, “Remember too, that the years during just after the war were wild. Nobody was bound by conventional restraints. All the male reporters were sleeping around.”²³⁷ *Life* magazine photographer Carl Mydans was an eyewitness to the application of the double standard to Higgins. Mydans remembered:

“Male journalists were always criticizing each other. They’d say a man was dishonest in his reporting or lazy or possibly an alcoholic, but they never damned a correspondent by accusing him of sleeping around. This charge was constantly leveled against Maggie. It wasn’t important enough to

²³⁴ Baehr, "Letter to Richard Kluger."

²³⁵ Lewis, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²³⁶ Levin, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

²³⁷ May, *Witness to War: A Biography of Marguerite Higgins*, p.103.

even consider in discussing a man and the worst thing they could think of in describing a women.”²³⁸

²³⁸ Ibid., p.165.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction.

“Colleagues admired her excellent reporting, envied her fantastic luck, and griped about her willingness to trade on her femininity.” – Marion Marzolf, *Up From the Footnote*.¹

Marzolf’s observation about Higgins described the opposite sides of her historical legacy. In many ways, this study of Higgins confirmed the duality of her image. On one hand, Higgins was acknowledged to have been a great reporter, who had the luck to have been transferred to the Far East just before the Korean War began – which gave her the opportunity to become famous for her coverage of the fighting. On the other hand, Higgins’ legacy was tarnished by allegations she traded sex for news stories and committed other moral and ethical transgressions. In the examination of these allegations, this study confirmed the dark side of her legacy as well.

The value of this study is that it was able to penetrate the architecture of the negative side of Higgins’ legacy, focus light on the sources of and reasons behind the allegations made about her, and identify ways in which some of these allegations may have been motivated by gender bias as well as by other factors. Thus, this study has both historical and theoretical implications. First, it contributes to journalism history by giving a new context for understanding an important woman journalist. Second, this study contributes to our understanding of how gender bias based on societal and

¹ Marzolf, *Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists*, p.77.

industry-specific attitudes can be actualized in information provided to authors of written history and in the biases of the authors themselves.

Contributions to journalism history.

This study identified forces that shaped Higgins' historical legacy. These are divided into five areas that follow:

Professional career.

One characteristic of Higgins' career was that, after working for two years as a cub reporter in New York, she spent all of the next twenty-one years of her career covering war. When she was not covering a fighting war in Europe, Korea or Vietnam, Higgins worked, as she described in a letter to one of her editors, as a "Cold War Correspondent."² When she was not covering actual international combat, her focus was on the threat of communism. Higgins' career coincided with a period of U.S. history that shaped the legacy of politicians, military leaders and others – including journalists. Just as one might ask what the historical legacy of Edward R. Murrow would have been without his coverage of World War II, it must be stated that, first and foremost, Higgins' legacy was shaped by the times in which she lived. One requirement for having one's legacy shaped by world events is that the challenges presented must be met. There is almost universal agreement by those who wrote about Higgins that she rose to the demands of covering international military and political conflict. She was an energetic and courageous journalist who took physical risks to get news stories.

Because Higgins was a woman, the coincidence that the era of her career was a time of war created another element of her legacy. Higgins was not unique in being

² Higgins, "Letter to George Cornish."

a woman who faced institutional discrimination by the military. The fact, however, that she was the *only* woman correspondent covering the Korean War at the time the military chose to enforce its ban on women in the combat zone gave a human face to an otherwise anonymous policy of institutional discrimination. The public attention this received and the fact that Higgins and her newspaper confronted this discrimination caused the ban to be reversed. The resulting increase in public awareness of bias against women journalists and, more generally, women in the workplace is an important part of Higgins' legacy.

Personal character.

Just as Higgins' legacy was affected by external events, it also was shaped by internal forces. Therefore, this thesis must consider Higgins' character. For the purpose of this discussion, character will be defined as the external expression of internal beliefs. Character traits have "to do with what is happening 'inside' the person who has them."³ Character traits are based on beliefs that a person holds about general things such as knowledge and effort. While these beliefs are internal, they become expressed in outward behavior.⁴ A person's character is his or her disposition toward 'outward' actions.⁵

Judgments about Higgins' character by her colleagues and those who wrote about her have affected her legacy. As described earlier in chapters four and five, the summary statements of aspects of Higgins' historical legacy included positive and negative factors that appear to be contradictions.

³ Lester H. Hunt, *Character and Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), p.5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.15-16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.5.

- Work ethic (1): Higgins' competitive nature contributed to her success - yet Higgins was criticized for being extremely ambitious, aggressive, ruthless and manipulative.
- Work ethic (2): Higgins was a resourceful reporter who went to the core source for a story - yet Higgins' colleagues criticized by her for breaking rules of traditional working relationships.
- Personal relationships: Higgins was conscientious in cultivating and maintaining relationships with important news sources - yet Higgins did not generally cultivate relationships with her colleagues and was not liked by many of them.
- Sexuality: Higgins' feminine charm contributed to her success - yet Higgins was a sexually liberated woman and her behavior offended some of her peers.

Was Higgins a person of extraordinary contradictions, or were there other factors that caused her colleagues and those who wrote about her to see the negative side of her character traits? This will be discussed below.

Allegations.

Higgins' legacy also was affected by allegations made against her. The following summarizes the research found by this study regarding each of the allegations.

- This study found no specific incident of a story that Higgins stole from another reporter and filed that was an unambiguous example of this type of behavior by her. From the research, however, it was shown how an

incident early in Higgins' career became believed to be an example of her dishonesty; and how this belief may have been fostered by her characteristic behavior of always being 'on' and probing other journalists for information.

- This study found no news story filed by Higgins that resulted from her using sex to get information. From the research it is shown that the basis for these beliefs could have been the apparently accurate fact that Higgins was a sexually liberated woman, and thus sexual behavior outside of a committed relationship was within her character.
- Documents were found in the Joseph Newman Papers that indicated the allegation that Higgins was relieved from her Berlin bureau chief post because of improper personal conduct was not true. In addition, research identified a biased attitude and possible motive for Higgins' sole accuser in this matter.

Herald Tribune management.

Research for this study has shown that the executives of the *Herald Tribune* failed to either (a) assert management control over some work situations involving Higgins so that there would be a clear understanding between Higgins and the others involved as to her responsibilities, and (b) clarify to the parties involved and the rest of the staff the actual facts and circumstances of controversies that surrounded her. Because the newspaper's executives did not take these steps, allegations against Higgins remained unanswered and allowed to persist as elements of her legacy.

Written history.

Scholars and authors have been responsible for Higgins' historical legacy. The findings of this study identified three factors concerning the written history that have influenced the legacy these authors created.

- Antoinette May's credentials as an author and the purpose of her book.

An analysis of the citations used by authors who wrote about Higgins revealed that May's book, *Witness to War*, had the greatest influence on subsequent authors. Even though May did not have the credentials of a serious scholar and wrote a trade book for the mass audience, other authors accepted her book as an authoritative account of Higgins' life. May chose to sensationalize the life of Higgins, especially from the perspective of sexual behavior, and this characterization was adopted by other authors.

- Kluger's bias against Higgins.

From the analysis of the written history of Higgins it appears that Kluger was the second most influential author in the establishment of her legacy through his book, *The Paper*. Study of the comments placed by Kluger on his interview notes and analysis of his transformation of interview quotes to final book copy suggest that he had a biased attitude toward Higgins when he was writing about her.

- Ignoring of Keeshen's doctoral dissertation.

Keeshen wrote the most complete, balanced and documented account of Higgins' life. She wrote this for her doctoral dissertation at the same time that May wrote her book. However, the analysis of works written about Higgins in recent years showed that Keeshen's dissertation was virtually

ignored by subsequent authors. Had Keeshen's work received the same attention given to that of May, Higgins' historical legacy would have developed on a more solid foundation and with a more balanced view.

Contributions to our understanding of gender bias.

Structure.

In addition to understanding the overall factors that shaped Higgins' legacy, this study focused specifically on to whether gender bias may have been a contributing factor. Psychological literature suggested a model that provides insights into that question. The Deaux-Major model presented a view of gender bias that has three ingredients: the instigators of gender bias, who are labeled as 'the perceivers;' the person discriminated against or the subject of sexual harassment, 'the target;' and the environment or location in which the gender bias took place, 'the situation.' Applied to the question of gender bias toward Higgins, the Deaux-Major model can be populated as follows:

- Perceivers.

In instances of possible gender bias against Higgins, the perceivers were the men who were her colleagues at the *Herald Tribune* and journalists at other news organizations who knew her. As stated in the model, not all these men who knew Higgins would have held negative beliefs about gender; and not all of the men who held negative beliefs would have acted on them. In the instance of Higgins' legacy, 'acting on negative beliefs' can be defined as having contributed to the allegations made against her. Individual differences in beliefs held and acted upon by men explain why some journalists, like Carl Levin and Steven White, who are on the

record as having made allegations about immoral and unethical behavior, may have had negative beliefs about Higgins; and why other men, like Carl Mydans and Keyes Beech, made statements about Higgins that countered those allegations – even though both groups of men knew Higgins at the same time and observed equivalent examples of her professional behavior.

It must be noted that these negative beliefs about Higgins have persisted for a long time. Higgins' obituaries, written in 1966, contained hints about attitudes held by her colleagues at the time. Higgins was described in the obituaries as sometimes being ruthless, and as using her feminine wiles and the charms of her beauty to achieve her success. These comments suggested that the seeds of more serious allegations were in place. Fifteen to twenty years later, when Levin, White and others were interviewed by authors May, Kluger, Keeshen, and Edwards, the allegations had taken full form. The change in society that shifted male attitudes about women to a more liberal position during that period did not affect the observations of Higgins' detractors. It must be remembered, however that, while these men were interviewed in the period of 'modern sexism,' they knew and worked with Higgins at a time closer to 'old-fashioned sexism.' It may be that their static views revealed that their 'values' remained unchanged.

Other than the fact that these negative perceivers lived at a time of conservative beliefs about the roles and behavior of women, there is no knowledge of the gender beliefs held by the individuals themselves. As was noted in the statement of the scope and purpose of this study, lack of access to sources was one of the research limitations.

- Target.

In this application of the Deaux-Major model, Higgins is the target. Research has shown that some women are more likely to be targets than others because of individual characteristics, and, as indicated by this research, various factors can be inferred that may have contributed to Higgins being a target. These included her youth and attractiveness, as well as the fact she was either separated from her first husband or a single woman during the time most of the allegations were made about her. Most of the allegations against Higgins occurred between 1942, the year that she joined the *Herald Tribune*, and 1950, when she left Korea. The only specific allegation that occurred after 1950 was made by Harrison Salisbury in 1955 when Higgins was in Moscow. At this time Higgins was married to Hall. However, as Higgins was in Moscow for six months without Hall at this time, the context is one of her effectively being separated from her husband. While these factors may have contributed to Higgins being a target, they certainly do not totally account for her being put into that position. Other single, young and attractive women war correspondents, such as Ann Stringer, Lee Miller and Margaret Bourke-White, covered World War II but were not the targets of such allegations. Ann Stringer, of United Press, was the young widow of a correspondent who had been killed by enemy fire. Stringer was described as tall, slender, beautiful, and possessing “butter-melting” eyes.⁶ Lee Miller, who worked for *Vogue*, was a photographer during the war. Miller was beautiful and uninhibited (“Taking off her clothes in front of a

⁶ Sorel, *The Women Who Wrote the War*, p.315.

camera, her family, friends, was natural to her.”⁷). Margaret Bourke-White, the famous *Time-Life* photographer, was described as having “healthy [sexual] appetites and [an] indifference to convention.”⁸ All three of these women possessed some of the characteristics of potential “targets,” but never became the subjects of allegations like those made about Higgins.

Perhaps more significant to Higgins is that the perceiver’s view of the target also has been influenced by gender beliefs held by the target, as well as by gender issues related to the personal goals of the target. Thus, the attitudes and beliefs of the target have an effect on those of the perceiver. In this regard, Higgins was very different than most of her female colleagues. The fact that in pursuing her career she was aggressive and frequently ignored or broke rules set down by others established Higgins as the antithesis of the circumspect and submissive woman that newspaper men in the 1940s and 1950s thought a female reporter ought to be. This may explain why Higgins’ female colleagues at the *Herald Tribune* and other woman journalists were not targets of similar types of allegations. Most of the women who worked at the *Herald Tribune*, for example, covered charity fund drives, wrote book reviews, managed the *Herald Tribune* Forum, reviewed movies, wrote about recipes, and covered fashion. Those who covered hard news as Higgins did were described as being prized for neatness and doing workaday, low-key reporting, values that were in line with male expectations. As compared to these women, it seems likely that Higgins projected a different set attitudes and beliefs about gender issues to the

⁷ Ibid., p.194.

⁸ Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography*, p.264.

perceivers. Perceivers may have judged that Higgins not only competed more directly with men than did the other women, but in doing so she also expressed gender values herself that were masculine. Higgins' ambition was visible from the time of her announcement in graduate school that she was going to be more famous than Dorothy Thompson.⁹ In the newspaper business at that time, the fact that Higgins wanted to be famous at all was a gender issue in itself because of the degree to which men dominated the profession.

- Situation.

The psychology literature discussed several gender-related characteristics of a situation that can promote bias. The first of these is the degree to which the target is working in a job that traditionally was performed by a male. In Higgins' case, while women had made inroads into the newspaper business, it still was a male-dominated profession during the period of her career. The second characteristic is the degree to which the job taken by a woman was thought to be the exclusive domain of males. This describes the attitude that some male journalists felt about position of war correspondent. While there had been women war correspondents in World War II, at the time of the Korean War some male journalists continued to believe that this role was a man's domain.

Other aspects of the Higgins' situation involved the New York *Herald Tribune*. Psychology literature pointed to the degree to which an organization tolerates bias as an important factor in its occurrence. There is no evidence that the *Herald Tribune* turned a blind eye toward gender bias. To the contrary, Helen Rogers Reid prided herself on the fact that the newspaper hired women and promoted their

⁹ Keeshen, "(Ph.D. Dissertation) Marguerite Higgins: Journalist, 1920-1966", p.60.

careers. However, in the early years that Higgins worked for the *Herald Tribune* the newspaper was still under the influence of Ogden Reid, whose ‘men’s club’ approach to management was described earlier. Prior to Ogden Reid’s death in 1947, some male employees described the newspaper as having a ‘fraternity atmosphere.’ In this environment, the newspaper’s executives and staff might not have been so vigilant against gender bias. Perhaps more important in Higgins’ situation was that during the years in which the allegations against her surfaced, she was working in Europe and the Far East. In Berlin and Korea, almost all of the people that Higgins worked with from the *Herald Tribune* and other news organizations were men. This established for Higgins another aspect of the situation described as promoting bias, that in which a woman is essentially the only female.

It might also be said that the *Herald Tribune* tolerated bias in Higgins’ situation through neglect of management responsibilities. Perhaps this was because she was on overseas assignment and her situation was not very visible to the newspaper’s management. Perhaps it was because the management structure at the newspaper that was in place during the years following the death of Ogden Reid was not responsive in general to personnel issues. But it appears that the *Herald Tribune* executives did not correct the allegations and actions against Higgins by Steven White in Berlin and Homer Bigart in Korea, both of which contributed to a negative view of her.

Other possible gender bias.

Two additional areas of possible gender discrimination were identified that may have affected Higgins’ historical legacy.

- Individual actions.

The men involved in the three incidents discussed above in which actions by *Herald Tribune* management executives could have established and communicated facts that would have diminished allegations against Higgins, possibly had biased attitudes toward Higgins. Steven White was discussed previously. Homer Bigart appears to have acted alone in trying to remove Higgins from covering Korea. Bigart lived in the era of ‘old-fashioned’ sexism, and was a Pulitzer Prize winning war correspondent during World War II. As noted in the discussion of the Deaux-Major model, Bigart may have felt that the job of war correspondent was a man’s domain. Robert Donovan’s underlying attitudes about Higgins were revealed in his observations, descriptions and treatment of her discussed in the findings.

- Imposition of a double standard

Research suggested that Higgins was held to different standards than her male colleagues that resulted in allegations that she was overly aggressive and manipulative. Examples of these comparisons included references to comments made by Homer Bigart, as well as to other men. Another area of double standard is one that was discussed in the literature – that of sexual behavior.

Motivation.

In the discussion of Steven White above, it was suggested that his motivation for trying to have Higgins removed from Berlin might have been his own career ambitions.

In addition, this study identified possible motivations for other behavior toward Higgins that may have been related to gender bias. In an interview with

Richard Kluger, Fred Farris, who worked with Higgins in the *Herald Tribune* Washington bureau, said that the negative attitudes toward Higgins were the result of “sexist biases.”¹⁰ Elizabeth Barnes, widow of *Herald Tribune* editor Joseph Barnes, remembered that the men at the *Herald Tribune* “kicked” Higgins around.¹¹ Judith Crist said that some of the stories about Higgins’ behavior were initiated by men who had been rejected by her. Finally, as noted above in discussion of his interview with Kluger, gender-biased statements were made about Higgins by *Herald Tribune* correspondent Carl Levin. An added factor that could have influenced the attitude of Levin is that he and Higgins were in litigation in 1965 over a comment he made about Higgins that she printed in her column. The incident may show the degree of sensitivity that men such as Levin had toward any act by Higgins that they felt was out of line. In this incident, a reporter who knew both Higgins and Levin told her that Levin had said in a conversation that a trip to Puerto Rico that Higgins had made was paid for by Republican backers who hoped she would write a column warning of the dangers of communism on that island. Higgins included the story in her column and denied Levin’s assertion. Similar claims and counter claims by columnists are part of the journalism landscape in Washington. The fact that Levin was outraged, claimed he never made the comment about Higgins’ trip and filed a legal suit against her seeking a retraction indicated the degree of sensitivity in their relationship.¹² The suit was eventually dropped for lack of evidence, but it is possible that Levin was harboring a grudge when Kluger interviewed him.

¹⁰ Farris, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹¹ Barnes, "Interview by Richard Kluger."

¹² Higgins, "Letters with Attorneys Regarding Carl Levin Legal Action."

Higgins was not liked by her colleagues.

Another factor that must be considered in discussion of attitudes that Higgins' colleagues had toward her was that she simply was not liked by many of them, both men and women. As noted above in the literature review, Higgins acknowledged that she was aggressive, competitive, could be rude, and sometimes displayed her temper when crossed. Higgins wrote that her behavior had to compensate for the fact that she lacked self-confidence and was ineffective in presenting herself to others.

Higgins stated that she knew these characteristics were barriers that kept people from liking her. This attitude toward Higgins was brought up by Crist in her interview by the author.

“Nobody liked her including editors. They were a rather stiff-necked and snooty bunch of men. Cornish and Everett Walker ...

“I’ve never heard [Higgins] referred to as a good writer. And I never thought she was a good writer. Homer [Bigart] was a good writer. . . Good writers or editors don’t win popularity contests. But you cannot be universally disliked. And I don’t remember anybody ... ever saying anything nice [about Higgins].”¹³

Walter Kerr, who was Higgins' boss in the Washington bureau, may have pinpointed the reason for this dislike when he said that Higgins “differed from the best [reporters] only in that ... she was more aggressively competitive.”¹⁴ This observation by Kerr suggests that a primary reason Higgins was disliked was the same reason she may have been treated with bias, and that the two are linked. Higgins' aggressive nature, perhaps borne from a need for competitive victory of

¹³ Crist, "Interview by Author."

¹⁴ Kerr, "Letter to Kathleen Keeshen."

perfectionist achievement, appears to be a likely cause of negative attitudes towards her, however they were expressed.

Conclusion

The basic question in this study was whether Higgins' historical legacy was accurate, and, if not, whether gender bias may have played a role in shaping her legacy.

The study analyzed the written legacy of Higgins and found that the authors presented moral and ethical allegations about her behavior. Examination of those allegations found their basis to be weak, either from lack of proof or because evidence existed that mitigated or contradicted the assertions. In addition, some of the sources of these allegations were identified to have possible gender bias against Higgins. Further, the study identified that the written legacy was greatly influenced by three authors. The work of one of these authors, May, could be challenged on the basis of her credentials as a serious biographer and her interest in writing a popular book rather than a scholarly treatment of Higgins' life. The work of the other two authors, Kluger and Edwards, could be questioned on the basis of possible bias against Higgins that they brought to their work.

The author concludes that Higgins' written legacy is not an accurate reflection of her life. The existence of gender bias is difficult to prove with certainty in historical studies. It appears likely that gender bias may have played some role in the development of this legacy. However, the study indicates that other factors contributed to her legacy as well. It appears likely that Higgins brought some of this bias on herself through her aggressive personality. For the most part, however, the

findings showed that negative factors in Higgins' legacy were the result of incorrect perceptions of her behavior – factors that could have been mitigated by actions of executives of the *Herald Tribune*. Finally, Higgins' legacy was damaged by the fact that authors who wrote about her presented a biased view of her that was handed down in her written legacy.

The conclusion of this study suggests that its findings have serious implications for the written legacy not only of women who are the subject of historical writing, but also notable people who are African-American, Latino, or other members of another minority group in society. This study identified a simple, three-step process that contaminated Higgins' legacy, and one or more of these factors could easily be introduced into the historical analysis of any individual. These three factors are: (1) the acceptance of a book or manuscript whose research has not been well documented as a factual account of a person's life by authors writing on the same subject; (2) the acceptance by writers of source information that is contaminated by possible bias; and (3) bias toward the subject on the part of the writers themselves.

This study also introduces a new dimension to bias itself. The psychology literature discussed in chapter two presented bias toward individuals and groups as motivated by stereotypes and beliefs. The result of this bias was attitudes and behavior directed toward the target by those holding those beliefs. In the examination of Higgins' legacy, the potential is seen for bias to be extended beyond those initially holding those beliefs to become part of the received understanding about an individual. Thus, forty years after her death, Higgins' legacy makes it possible for

people to hold attitudes about her that are biased, even though those individuals do not hold beliefs themselves that would cause that bias.

Direction for Future Research

This study is a small, first step of a process that hopefully will lead to a fuller and more accurate understanding of Higgins' historical legacy. This study has not only demonstrated the weaknesses in the existing written record of Higgins life, it has revealed that one of the problems of this record is that it was influenced by just a few individuals who were relying on a limited amount of information.

Higgins' personal papers are only now being processed by Syracuse University, where they are housed. The unprocessed state of the Higgins collection has limited its usefulness. Kluger's interviews, available in the collection of his papers at Yale University, as well as smaller amounts of information that exist in other archive collections, are the only other sources of data available to researchers. Interviews conducted by Keeshen and May for the writing of their respective dissertation and book have been withheld from use by scholars. Hopefully, all of this material will be made available to future research. This must be done for two reasons. First, in the interest of history scholars need to create a more accurate record of Higgins' life that is based on all available information. Second, journalism historians need to assemble a pool of information large enough to promote scholarship that brings alternative approaches to the study of women journalists. These approaches need to deal more directly with gender bias.

Another area of future research is to determine the degree to which, and instances when, the historical legacies of other notable women have been

contaminated by biased sources of information and biased authors. This thesis serves as a case study of how the historical legacy of a person who is a potential 'target' of gender bias can be affected.

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